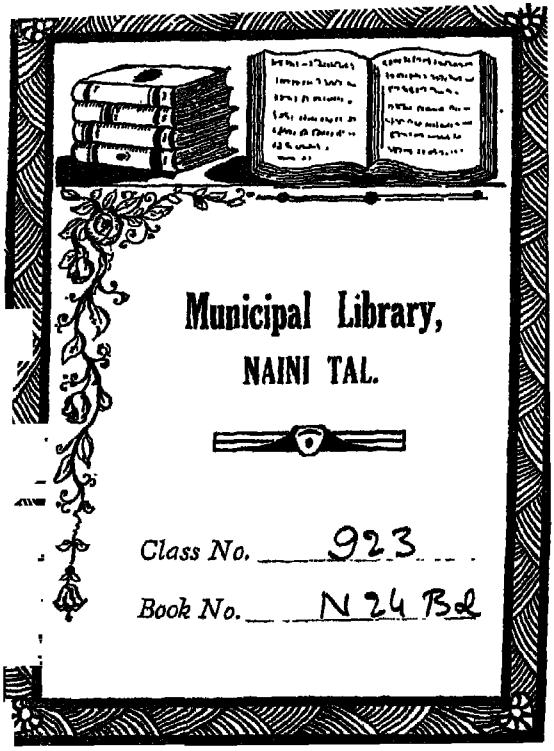

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By

BRIGADIER-GENERAL

COLIN R. BALLARD

C.B., C.M.G.



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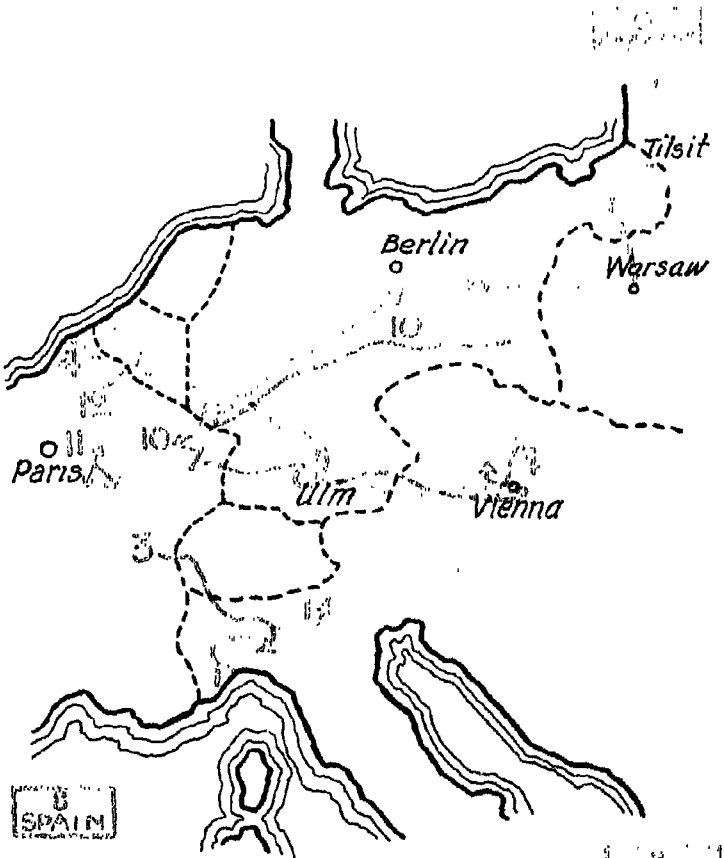
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TO

J. HOLLAND ROSE

IN PROFOUND ADMIRATION OF HIS
WORKS ON NAPOLEON

The NAPOLEONIC WARS



1.	1796–97.	Against 1st Coalition. Montenotte. Lodi. Mantua. Arcole. Rivoli.
2.	1798–99.	Egypt. Pyramids. Nile. Acre.
3.	1800.	2nd Coalition. Crossing of Alps. Marengo.
4.	1805.	3rd Coalition. Ulm. Austerlitz.
5.	1806.	4th Coalition. Jena and Auerstadt.
6.	1807.	4th Coalition. Eylau. Friedland.
7.	1809.	5th Coalition. Eckmuhl. Aspern. Wagram.
8.	1808–14.	Peninsular War. Corunna. Talavera. Torres Vedras. Salamanca. Vittoria. Pyrenees.
9.	1812.	Borodino. Moscow. Beresina.
10.	1813.	6th Coalition. Lutzen. Dresden. Leipzig.
11.	1814.	6th Coalition. Montmirail. Montereau.
12.	1815.	7th Coalition. Quatre Bras. Ligny. Waterloo.

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INTRODUCTORY

CHAPTER I

Arma Virumque

THE MAN.—The story of Napoleon makes fascinating reading, but it must be admitted that it is a formidable task, and many students hesitate to take the plunge.

His life was a succession of big events; there were campaigns and battles; there were changes of constitution, administrative reforms, plots and counterplots; there were marriages, family quarrels and chronicles of scandal. Hundreds of actors cross the stage and there are lightning changes of scenery.

If the conscientious student tries to take in every detail as it comes along he may well find himself bewildered in such a maze.

My convinced opinion is that a beginning should be made with a simple outline, something that the eye can take in and the mind can grasp. And therefore the object which I have set before me in this book is to present an outline of the man and his story, as clear as I can make it, and painted with a broad brush; it is not a picture of France, nor is it a history of wars; and in spite of the title of this chapter it is not an epic.

The main facts of Napoleon's career as a soldier and administrator have been established by the painstaking research of many historians; there are points in dispute, such as the credibility of certain witnesses and the authenticity of certain letters, but these are of secondary importance; on the main facts there is agreement.

There is no such agreement, however, on matters of opinion; the field is open to discussion and conjecture about the personality of the man, his character, his emotions, his desires, his thoughts. We might look to his contemporaries, some of whom knew him well, to provide the best evidence on these points; but the Europe of those days was divided into two camps, his devoted adherents, and his bitter enemies; so it is but natural that their opinions and even their facts are coloured by prejudice one way or other.

To his friends he was an idol: his sole object was the glory and welfare of his beloved France: he was the greatest general that ever commanded an army and the greatest statesman that ever restored order and prosperity out of anarchy and distress: he was a faithful and generous friend, a fond father, and though he was domineering towards his own family, he was always zealous in their interests: his popularity with his soldiers and servants proves his kindness of heart. Public policy is pleaded as an excuse for his divorce and other unpleasant stories which cannot be denied.

His enemies go to the other extreme: they recognise his capability as a soldier and statesman but allow him no other virtues: his loudly proclaimed love of France was merely a pretext for his own ambition, which was the keynote of his whole life: even his generosity was dispensed with a view to securing adherents, a form of bribery in fact: he was without scruples or principles of any kind: he had no true affections, but a very bad temper: he had admirers and supporters, but they were his slaves and not real friends: from his schooldays to his death he never had one intimate friend with whom to share his confidence: he was a deliberate liar—witness his bulletins on his campaigns: he was a cold-blooded murderer—witness the execution of the Duc d'Enghien.

Some later writers have tried to take an impartial view. They cannot believe that so much white and so much black could exist in one and the same person; they therefore

reject the worst stories as inventions, or at least exaggerations, of his enemies; they find extenuating circumstances; and so, by softening the higher lights and deeper shadows they arrive at what seems to be a possible and consistent picture. The result is something rather grey in tone and blurred in outline. Such a picture is surely further from the truth than any of the others; there was black in his life, and white, but nothing grey or indefinite.

I suggest as a solution of the apparent incongruities that he was a magnificent actor, who throughout his life played a succession of varying roles. This does not imply that there were no moments of real emotion, tenderness, passion, anger; the greatest actors have thrown themselves so completely into their parts that they have felt all the emotions of the character they portrayed; but they throw off those emotions with their masks, and no trace of them remains. So Napoleon shed real tears by the side of the dying Lannes, and cried that not all his ambitions could compensate him for the loss of this one friend—but ten minutes later he was pursuing his ambitions with all his usual energy. He could change his part as easily and completely as the actor does.

Nor does this suggestion detract from his greatness. I think he was the greatest man that ever lived. It is a proof of the scope of that mighty brain that he could play so many parts and with such success in each.

He had all the characteristics which are commonly associated, from an uncomplimentary point of view, with the typical actor. He was above all things self-conscious, and sensitive to applause or censure; he was impatient, always grasping at big things, and yet full of petty vanities. He could brook no rivals; in his own company he preferred to have second-rate men who had no possibility of being compared with himself; it might be said that he could forgive a failure sooner than a success.

Even as a child he wanted the hero's part in mimic

battles at school. As a mere boy he made efforts to secure the leading role in the provincial barn at Corsica, but abandoned such melodrama without a pang when he saw an opening on the bigger stage of Paris. When he was sure of the public support he went into management on his own account, selected his own plots, apportioned the parts, and set the scenery. When he found his public falling away he blamed them, but never himself.

If this premise be accepted, it provides a logical solution for all the stories which are based on reliable evidence; we need not shut our eyes to obvious facts or search for doubtful excuses. He would decide that a certain plot must be carried through; if he found it necessary that he himself should don the villain's mask he did so. This suggestion is no excuse, but it is an explanation.

It must be admitted at once that great authors have held a different view of his character. Carlyle saw in him "an ineradicable feeling for reality." Surely this implies that he had some principles so strong that they would rule his every act, so deeply rooted that they could not be laid aside even for one moment. But before we pass judgment on this we must see what his actions were, we must read the narrative of bare facts, and then consider how they can be reconciled with any constant guiding principle. I therefore adjourn this argument till the conclusion of the narrative.

The late Professor Cramb used to liken Napoleon's career to the theme of the old Greek Tragedy. There the young hero first appears in humble guise, herding the flocks on the hillside, or in some such lowly occupation. He rises swiftly, and goes from pinnacle to pinnacle of glory, power, and wealth, until he seems to have reached the summit of human ambition. Then a cloud appears at the back of the stage, and the point of the tragedy is that the audience see this cloud growing and threatening while the hero is quite

unconscious of it till he is overwhelmed in the final catastrophe.

In order to make the narrative as clear as possible I have followed the idea of Professor Cramb, and divided the career into three phases.

First Phase, up to the year 1800. Napoleon the Adventurer, with nothing to lose and everything to win.

Second Phase, from 1800 to 1809. Napoleon the Man of Destiny, with everything won.

Third Phase, from 1809 to the end. Napoleon the Man against Destiny, with nothing to win and everything to lose.

THE SOLDIER.—Like all great generals, Napoleon fitted his strategy and tactics to the situation and the ground, so there is plenty of variety in his campaigns. There are, however, certain marked characteristics common to all, and if these are discussed first it will simplify the narrative.

The best idea of the Napoleonic Theory is gleaned from his own words; he considered himself the only authority on the Art of War, and was fond of laying down the law; his celebrated Maxims have been collected in book form, and many of them, but not all, are applicable even to this day. The following are selected to give a rough idea.

MAXIM I.—"It is only by a close study of all the details that a general can form the plans which alone lead to success." This shows the importance he attached to "*previous preparation.*"

The Napoleonic Legend gives the impression that he could gallop on to a field of battle, grasp the situation at one glance, and issue orders to secure immediate victory. Nothing could be further from the truth. He prepared himself by reading the campaigns of great generals, and then, lying for hours full length on a map, he applied his theories to the specific situation and evolved his plan of campaign; he prepared his Ordnance and Commissariat

services with infinite pains; he prepared his troops by constant drill and discipline. This maxim applies even more strongly to modern warfare, where the engines of war are so much more complicated to construct and to work.

MAXIM II.—"Disperse to feed, concentrate to fight." The first half of this does not apply to the present day. Napoleon's troops lived chiefly on the country, which was one of the good reasons for fighting on foreign soil; but of course a concentrated army would soon exhaust local supplies, and therefore he kept his men spread out till the last possible moment. The armies of modern days are too big to subsist on the country; supplies are therefore collected at one or more bases and are then forwarded along the lines of communication to the troops in the field; steamships, railways, and motors have simplified the question of transport, so it is no longer necessary to "disperse to feed."

The concentration was close and sudden, with a view to surprise.

MAXIM III.—". . . As for me I am always on interior lines." He aimed to put himself on the hub of a wheel with his opponents in a semicircle on the rim. His formation was generally in two wings with a heavy central reserve which he kept under his own immediate control. This is the "*Phase of Manœuvre.*"

MAXIM IV.—"There are many generals in Europe, but as a rule they see too many things; as for me, I only see one thing, the main body of the enemy." This, at first sight, appears to contradict Maxim I, which talks of "all the details." But that was at quite another moment, before touch with the enemy was gained. Once the enemy was before him Napoleon had no regard for any details and fixed his whole mind on preparing the decisive blow.

MAXIM V.—"I always concentrate superior forces at the decisive point." He prides himself on being able to do

this even though his total strength was inferior to that of the enemy. During the phase of manœuvre he would detain with his left wing one part of the enemy's force while he swung his reserve to the right for an attack; reversing the process he would leave his right wing as a detaining force while he swung his reserve to the left; this operation might be repeated two or three times till he saw his opportunity for a blow which would be decisive, and then he concentrated every available man. "If you cut down the trunk of a tree the branches will fall"—in other words a *victory at the decisive point meant a victory everywhere.*

Let us look at these maxims again. "I see only one thing"—"I am always on interior lines"—"I." That is the real key-note of the Napoleonic Theory, it was a one-man show. He himself must supervise every detail of the previous preparation, he must decide the moment for concentration and advance, he must keep big reserves in his own hands; with his own eyes he must see the main body of the enemy and decide the moment and direction of the decisive blow. To assist him there was no Staff, in the modern acceptance of the term; Berthier was a very good head clerk and an indefatigable worker; he has been described as the "heaven-born Chief of Staff," but only by those who have no idea of the duties of that office. Nor would Napoleon trust any of his subordinate commanders; we read of him inspecting outposts and making reconnaissances with his own eyes. He never made a detachment when it could be avoided, because it meant loss of his personal control, and it is noteworthy that nearly all his big detachments, in Spain, in Russia, and at Waterloo, came to grief. Nor is this surprising; he had looked for no initiative from his subordinates, in fact, he repressed it; he wanted his army to be a perfect machine, drilled and disciplined, but worked by one man only. How could a Grouchy, who had never been allowed to exercise any judgment or initiative,

be expected to develop these qualities for the first time in the middle of a campaign?

Finally, Napoleon must be present in person to infect his soldiers with his own confidence and enthusiasm for the final assault; we see the Grenadiers of the Old Guard marching past and waving their bearskins as they shouted "*Vive l'Empereur.*"

One man can control perhaps 40,000; Napoleon, who was a genius, could control perhaps 100,000; no human being could control more; so when he had half a million in Russia he was forced to make big detachments; the commanders of these detachments, afraid of using their own judgment, sat awaiting orders, which either did not come or else were so late that they were quite inapplicable to the changed situation. It is not going too far to say that, as a rule, the smaller his army the more brilliant his success.

It is interesting here to contrast his system with that of the great Von Moltke, who is accepted as the first exploiter of the Theory of Exterior Lines. He aimed to place his forces on the rim of the wheel and make converging attacks towards the enemy on the hub. It was not that he had a theoretical preference for the converging attack, it was forced upon him by concrete numbers; in 1866, for instance, he had a quarter of a million men; such numbers must be spread over many miles of ground, and personal supervision becomes impossible. Foreseeing this Von Moltke invented the modern "Staff," to keep him in touch with his scattered units, to collect and compile their reports, to sift the evidence as to the movements of the enemy, and, after he himself had made the general plan, to issue orders to the subordinate commanders. But he went further than this; he foresaw that situations might change in a distant part of the field; he therefore expected his subordinates to use their own judgment, and he trained them beforehand with this in view. Instead of keeping reserves in his own hands he extended

his lines so as to give room for every Army Corps to come into action and every man "to pull his weight" from the first.

It is obvious that if the opposing armies are fairly equal in numbers this method frustrates Napoleon's method of concentrating superior forces for the decisive blow; the latter may indeed get superior force at one point, but only by leaving inferior force at some other point. The essential of the converging attacks is that they must be resolute and well-timed; if half the force comes up too soon it may be defeated before the remainder arrives, in other words it may be defeated in detail. But if every man is thrown resolutely into the attack Von Moltke may crush the first lines before Napoleon can bring his reserves into play; in this case it is Napoleon who is defeated in detail. It cannot therefore be argued that either exterior or interior lines have intrinsic advantages—the victory will go to the commander who grasps the initiative and carries it through with resolution.

In his two campaigns Von Moltke was fortunate in being opposed by indifferent generals who stood on the defensive and allowed him to get in his enveloping blows; it is impossible to say what might have happened if he had tried to swallow a Napoleon instead of the Austrian commander, Benedek.

In the same way Napoleon was fortunate, in his early campaigns, that he did not thrust his head into the jaws of a Von Moltke. When, at Waterloo, he thrust himself between Wellington and Blucher he could not concentrate superior forces at the decisive point because they would not let him.

Whatever arguments the military critic may produce for or against interior lines, there can be no doubt that Napoleon's system of close personal control has passed away for ever. There must still be one scheme of operations, which may go into minute details, there must be one directing head, and it is possible that with modern means of quick

communications he may exercise a certain amount of control in the course of the battle. But there must be decentralisation and initiative. Von Moltke was the first tactician to foresee this and train his army accordingly.

In each of these great commanders we can trace the four phases—*preparation, concentration, manœuvre, decisive blow.* The difference between them lies in the concentration. Von Moltke concentrated on the battle-field, Napoleon before contact with the enemy.

PART I

THE ADVENTURER

CHAPTER II

Early Days

THE FAMILY.—The Buonapartes came of a noble Italian family which had settled in Corsica in the sixteenth century; Carlo Marie Buonaparte was born in 1746, and, at the age of 18, married Letizia Ramolino, aged 15; they had thirteen children, of whom eight grew up. Carlo owned a small property at Ajaccio and practised as an attorney; it has been calculated that his total income did not exceed 1,500 francs (£60) a year; the good man seems to have spent most of his time in making schemes to support his family and its annual increase. Letizia, afterwards known as "Madame Mère," was a careful economist, and thriftiness was one of her characteristics, even when the children whom she had fed and brought up on sixty pounds a year included an Emperor and three Kings. Some notes on the family will be found in Part IV.

The second son, Napoleon, was born on August 15th, 1769. In the same year, in another island, another babe came into the world—Arthur Wellesley.

Though Corsican by blood Napoleon was born a subject of Louis XV. The distressful island had been for a couple of centuries under the Republic of Genoa, but the patriots had never accepted the yoke and there were periods of anarchy; in 1755 the celebrated Paoli became their leader and, having succeeded in driving out the Genoese, he ruled wisely and well; he nearly succeeded in stamping out the vendetta. In '64 the Genoese asked the French for assistance, and after many intrigues the French not only sent a

force, but took possession of the island. The patriots made a gallant stand against their new masters, but by '69 they found themselves defeated. Paoli and some 300 of his followers sailed to England where they remained for twenty years.

It is scarcely surprising that a highly-strung child like the little Napoleon, brought up in the land of the vendetta and nursed on stories of foreign cruelty, should suck in all the passions of the turbulent patriots; Paoli was the hero of his young days. Carlo however had made friends with the representatives of tyranny, including the French Governor, and succeeded in getting nominations for his two eldest boys; for Joseph to the college at Autun, and for Napoleon to the military school at Brienne. In his formal application Carlo declared that the correct name of the second was Napoleone de Buonaparte.

BRIENNE.—On Jan. 1st, '79, both boys entered the college at Autun, where Napoleon was to learn French before going on to Brienne. In three months "he had learnt sufficient French to enable him to converse easily and to write small essays and translations"—so says one of his masters.

In April Napoleon parted from Joseph with tears and went on to Brienne. His own account of his life there was given much later: "I was the poorest of all my schoolfellows. They always had money in their pockets; I never. I was proud, and was most careful that nobody should perceive this. . . . I could neither laugh nor amuse myself like the others. Buonaparte the schoolboy was out of touch with his comrades and was not popular."

From a school report: "he was taciturn, fond of solitude, capricious, haughty, extremely disposed to egotism, seldom speaking, energetic in his answers, ready and sharp in repartee, full of self-love, ambitious, and of unbounded aspirations": this master was no mean judge. Another, unconsciously prophetic, called him "imperious." A third, who found his character "submissive and sweet," is funny.

The other boys saw him as a small, sallow child of provincial air, who talked bad French, played no games, and, worst of all, worked very hard—so they dubbed him "*Paille-au-nez*," a mispronunciation of Na-*pale-o-ne*, and left him alone.

Before the end of his five years, however, he had settled down and made a few friends; chief among these was Bourienne. The authenticity of Bourienne's *mémoires* has been questioned, and, even if authentic, they have been proved to be quite incorrect in many instances; he liked to show his intimacy with the great general, and so made the most, and perhaps more than the most, of this schoolboy friendship; it is, however, true that Napoleon kept him by his side for five years as private secretary, and nobody had better opportunities of observing his life.

Some people have found it strange that so few friends of his schooldays have been mentioned later on, but one condition of the school was that the boys should be of noble birth, so it is not surprising that few of them were left in France after the Terror.

In '84 he was nominated to a King's Scholarship at the Military Academy at St. Cyr in Paris; he arrived in October and spent one year there. He wrote a letter to a master at Brienne in which he says: "The King's scholars could only learn in the school, in place of qualities of the heart, feelings of vanity and self-satisfaction. . . . Instead of maintaining a large staff of servants for these pupils and giving them every day meals of several courses, and keeping up an expensive stud of horses and grooms, would it not be better, of course without interrupting their studies, to compel them to be sufficient for their own wants—that is to say, without compelling them to do their own cooking, to let them eat soldier's bread, or something similar, to accustom them to beat their own clothes and brush their own boots and shoes, etc.?" It may be imagined that he was not popular with these young scions of the noblesse of France.

The French writer Arthur Lèvy, one of the greatest of Napoleon's apologists, has gone to much trouble to prove that old friends of these days, old servants, even old landladies were never forgotten by the Emperor.

His father died in February, '85.

THE LIEUTENANT.—On September 1st, '85, he received his first commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Artillery Regiment of La Fère, stationed at Valence, on the Rhone. We have a picture of the young officer from the pen of the Duchesse d'Abrantès (Madame Junot); this lady was the daughter of Monsieur Permon, a native of Corsica, whose house in Paris was the only one that Napoleon frequented. Laurette Permon, as she then was, has left her impression of him at this period, though she was a small girl at this time. Proud of his new uniform, the sixteen-year-old officer went to show himself off to his friends. "His boots were so inordinately large that his legs, which were very slender, disappeared in them entirely"; on seeing him she and her sister could not restrain their laughter and to his face nicknamed him "Puss in Boots." He did not mind, it appears, for a few days later the Lieutenant took them a toy carriage containing a puss in boots.

Napoleon joined his regiment on November 5th. He was on fairly good terms with his brother officers, but we find no mention yet of that popularity among the men which was afterwards so wonderful. He seems, however, to have lost some of his taciturnity and awkwardness. He showed himself "a great talker, embarking on the smallest provocation on interminable arguments," and "applying himself to pleasing the fair sex, who received him with acclamation." He took lessons in dancing.

He had moments of depression too, in which he played Hamlet: "Always solitary among men, I am here, within doors, dreaming, and giving full vent to all my melancholy. To what will it drive me to-day? To thoughts of death. Still at the dawn of life I may hope for many years to come.

It is now six or seven years since I last saw my country. What madness then drives me to self-destruction? Doubtless it is the hollowness of life. If one is to die why not kill one's self?——" This was between dancing lessons.

The next eight years were spent in garrison at Valence and Auxonne, with long intervals in Corsica, which amounted altogether to four years. Sometimes he was there on leave, sometimes without it. One of his detractors, Jung, saw in this absence insubordination " enough to have shot him a hundred times over in ordinary times." Lèvy the apologist proves to his own satisfaction that the absence was justifiable, or, alternatively, that it was condoned by the Minister of War who afterwards reinstated him. Napoleon had a good deal of trouble in explaining it away, but, as Jung says, the times were not ordinary, and after the " suspects " had left the army in '92 there were few officers who had had any education, so the Powers were not hard on a young man of strong republican views.

During all these years he was a voracious reader. At school he had chiefly distinguished himself in mathematics and history. He continued to read history, studying Cæsar, Alexander, Cromwell (in whom he took peculiar interest), Turenne, Frederick the Great, and in fact nearly all celebrated generals; Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, Plato's *Republic*, Plutarch's *Lives*, philosophy, history, geography and anything else he could lay hands on. He made voluminous notes of all he read.

DUTY.—In these eight years there are three points that call for notice—his self-sacrificing devotion to his mother and family, his crude attempts at authorship, and his metamorphosis from a Corsican rebel into a French patriot.

Napoleon has often been accused of selfishness, and it is hard to acquit him of it in later years, but there were no signs of it yet. His sympathy for his mother brought out

all that was best in him and we can award it a full measure of admiration ; he came near starving himself to assist her. To lighten her burden he took his young brother, Louis, to Auxonne, and there the pair of them lived on his pay of ninety-two francs a month ; he gave up all society and pleasure in order to educate the lad. His first thoughts when he got some money were to assure his mother's comfort ; he sent her 60,000 francs from Paris immediately after his rise to fame.

Yet there is a curious lack of warmth in his affection ; his passionate feelings were stirred by thoughts of Corsica's wrongs, by dreams of glory and power, and later on by glowing pride in his gallant army—there was no lack of passion in that southern blood—but it spent itself more on abstract causes than on individuals. The devotion to his family seems to have been imposed by a keen sense of duty ; on his father's death in '85 the youth of sixteen assumed his place as head of the family and took his responsibilities very seriously ; a few years later he is discussing and dictating projects of marriages and careers ; by the time he was thirty he was a domineering benefactor ; before the end his tyranny brought about quarrels with all except *Madame Mère*. But in these early days it was duty that ruled him, perhaps the only case in which there can be no doubt at all that it was duty with no thought of self in it, no ulterior motive, no hope of reward.

AUTHORSHIP.—Biographers, keen to detect the first sprouts of genius, have analysed with care all the writings of which there is any record. First various letters, then essays, pamphlets, and a history of Corsica, all written before he was twenty.

One of his first efforts was an essay which he wrote for a competition at the Academy of Lyons, in '86. He pictures Ambition as a figure with pallid cheeks, wild eyes, hasty step, jerky movements and sardonic smile, for whom crimes are a sport, while lies and calumnies are merely arguments

and figures of speech. In after years he had the grace to be ashamed of this trash and tried to buy up every copy.

Later came the history of Corsica, which he began about '87. He proposed to dedicate it to Paoli and sent him the manuscript for approval. Holland Rose says: "After keeping it an unconscionable time the old man now coldly replied that he did not desire the honour of Buonaparte's panegyric, though he thanked him heartily for it; that the consciousness of having done his duty sufficed for him in his old age; and, for the rest, history should not be written in youth. A further request from Joseph for the return of the slighted manuscript brought the answer that he, Paoli, had no time to search his papers. After this, how could hero-worship subsist?"

These efforts, and the letter already quoted giving his impressions of St. Cyr, tempt us to write him down as a prig—but this would be unfair. Take a child of ten and throw him into a school in a foreign, and to him a hostile, land; naturally he does not mix with his fellows and is "taciturn and capricious"; he is thrown back on himself and his books, and so, at the age when other boys are dreaming of feats of prowess on the play-ground, his horizon had extended to the battle-fields of Cæsar, Alexander, and such great names as these; until the ideas that are surging in his brain burst out in youthful effusions. It is unnecessary to look into them too deeply, perhaps they were not so much expressions of belief as exercises for his brain. And in this respect they were of real value, not to the world, but to himself; they trained his mind to analysis and arrangement of thoughts, and to form those quick, clear decisions which made him a successful man of action. He was essentially a man of action, but his great actions were guided by judgment, not by impulse; and perhaps it was the strange surroundings of those early days which developed his powers of forming judgments, even though the immediate results

were immature. They are curious, but would attract little notice unless lifted into prominence by after events.

THE FRENCHMAN.—The forces which shaped his youthful mind were strangely contradictory. The injustice to Corsica, which was not at all imaginary, roused angry feelings of rebellion against established and hereditary authority. Next, schooldays awakened his instinct for discipline, and it was discipline of a stern type, unquestioning obedience to a single authority. Then revolutionary propaganda and Rousseau's influence inclined him to modify this, by allowing that though the governor must be strong, he has duties towards the governed, and if he fails in them the latter have the right to revolt. Rousseau stirs in him pity towards the lower classes, but a closer view of the Paris mob on August 10th, '92, brought out the opinion that a " whiff of grape-shot " would do it a lot of good. War brings back the conviction that great things can only be carried through when there is one supreme authority. In later years we see that this was his final conviction, and he went so far as to believe that the hereditary principle was necessary, not only for his own glory, but for the purpose of establishing a solid authority which would not be shaken by political upheavals. A certain Colonel Chauvin became so celebrated for his worship of Napoleon that " Chauvinism " has been adopted in many languages to express blind devotion to a single ideal. This was what Napoleon asked for.

But, to get back to early days, he began by being intensely Corsican and railed bitterly, not against the French *monarchy*, but against the French *race*, which dominated his own. How was it that France became the land of his adoption? Three influences seem to have had their share in this. First, the Revolution, and he honestly sympathised with the revolt against cruel and stupid tyranny; until '89 he had hated all Frenchmen, but the new ideas brought him into touch with the majority of them, and he could listen to French views without prejudice. Second, personal

ambition, which led him to look for a bigger stage than the island. Third, his quarrel with Paoli, which may have been the deciding factor. Lastly we are faced with the bald fact that his final exit from Corsica was not voluntary at all, but he was fairly chased out by the islanders themselves.

In '89 Mirabeau proposed in the Assembly that Paoli should be invited to return home from England; no doubt the idea was that Paoli, delighted with the new freedom, would willingly accept it on behalf of Corsica, and thus the question of the distressful island would be solved. But the worthy man had mellowed with age and twenty years' study of the British Constitution; passing through Paris he was received with honour, but what he saw and heard in the Assembly gave him a feeling that this freedom might not be an unmixed blessing. On his arrival home in '90 he found the first signs of freedom already established in the form of Jacobin clubs and National Guards; but the mountaineers, who had so long been brought up as rebels, feared the French even bringing gifts in their hands; the priesthood, whom the Assembly proposed to disestablish, leant their considerable weight against this new freedom. The French officials, who were relics of the old regime, had little authority, and before long became *suspect*. In fact local politics were in a pretty state of muddle. Napoleon hastened to make the acquaintance of his hero; there was no muddle in his youthful mind, he was still a Corsican, but had decided that free Corsica might very well join hands with the new democracy, and, as usual, he expected everybody else to jump to his own conclusions. Paoli however had his doubts, and the result was a certain coolness between the idol and his worshipper. Next time Napoleon came home on leave he was still more enthusiastic; he succeeded in being elected as Colonel of the local National Guards by canvassing for recruits who would vote for him, and carrying off one of his opponents; he then made an attempt to get hold of the citadel of Ajaccio; this led to a brawl which

ended in his defeat, and he went off to Paris, much shaken in some of his earlier faiths.

The year '92 with its September massacres and trial of the King quite decided Paoli's attitude; the Corsicans rallied to him, and declared against the French. Napoleon came back from Paris to find them quite deaf to his appeals. There followed intrigues, alarums and excursions; attempts to seize the citadel, attempts by the French to arrest Paoli, attempts by the Corsicans to arrest Napoleon. Details are unnecessary; suffice it to say that the patriots who had fought all their lives for freedom refused to have it thrust upon them. They hunted the champion of the new democracy out of the island and pillaged his home.

In June, '93, with his mother and family, Napoleon sailed for France; there were no half measures about him, so it became "*la belle France*," LA PATRIE.

CHAPTER III

Toulon and Vendemiaire

THE OUTCASTS.—The Buonapartes found the South of France almost as much distracted as the island they had left. It must be remembered that in this summer of '93 the Mountain overthrew the Girondins, and spread such terror that there were many risings in the provinces.

Lucien in his memoirs describes the situation of the family at Marseilles: "Napoleon, an artillery officer, devoted the larger part of his pay to the help of his family. In our character as patriots and refugees we obtained rations of soldiers' bread and some slight assistance, enough to keep us alive, but we were above all aided by the economy of our good mother."

Madame Buonaparte was helped at this time by Monsieur Clary, a rich merchant, who was full of pity. He had two daughters, Julie and Désirée, the former of whom became, afterwards, Joseph's wife. Napoleon thought Joseph a "lucky rascal" but did not specify whether the luck consisted in the lady or her *dot*. He himself wanted to marry Désirée, but she was not willing; she did however become a queen later on, for she married Bernadotte, who was elected Crown Prince of Sweden in 1810; the present Royal House of Sweden is descended from them.

After seeing his mother settled at Marseilles Napoleon went to Nice to join the 4th Regiment of Artillery, which was then engaged in suppressing the many risings in the South. It was at this time that he wrote the *Souper de*

Beaucaire, which shows a distinct advance on his previous compositions. It is an imaginary discussion between some merchants and an officer, obviously Napoleon himself, who have met round the table of a country inn. The merchants are from Marseilles and other towns in revolt. The gallant soldier urges them to patriotism and united action under the Jacobins; he reminds them of the great services which Marseilles had rendered in the past to the cause of liberty: let not Marseilles disgrace herself by calling on foreigners to aid her against her own country: the men of the Mountain are stronger than the Girondins: therefore the Marseillais should accept the rule of the Mountain: in a national crisis anything that saves the State is justifiable.

It would be interesting to know if there was anything at the back of Napoleon's mind while he wrote this, which, on the face of it, is a simple appeal for patriotism. Was he arguing with himself? Most people would have found that the situation required a good deal of debate, and even the young man, who rarely took long to make up his mind, may have felt that he must arrange his thoughts in strictly logical form. Was it a political move, to show the Jacobins that they had in him a strong supporter and at the same time a clear thinker? Was it even more than this, a clever piece of trimming? A careful study shows that though he calls for support for the Mountain the argument is not based on the intrinsic value of the Mountain, but on the crisis of the nation; if, then, the Jacobins continued to be successful —very well, here is a proof that he supported them; if they were upset—very well, the *Souper* may quite well be read to imply that he hated the Jacobins with all his heart, and it was only the patriotism of the simple soldier that made him excuse himself to the merchants, for taking the path of duty instead of the path of inclination. Anything that saves the State is justifiable—but this suggests that "something" needs justification.

TOULON.—The execution of the King in January, '93, had stirred all Europe, and by the middle of the year the First Coalition was taking action. As there were many royalists in the South of France, the British Government decided to send Lord Hood's fleet to Toulon, hoping it might be made a rallying point for all who were opposed to the Terror. The Spanish House of Bourbon added its fleet, the Bourbons of Naples a few troops, and the Hapsburgs of Austria promised to send 5,000 men, but they never came. The allied force consisted of 2,000 British, 4,000 Spanish, and 1,500 royalists, quite insufficient in the opinion of the English general, who thought the garrison should be 50,000. Lord Hood had twenty-one ships of the line.

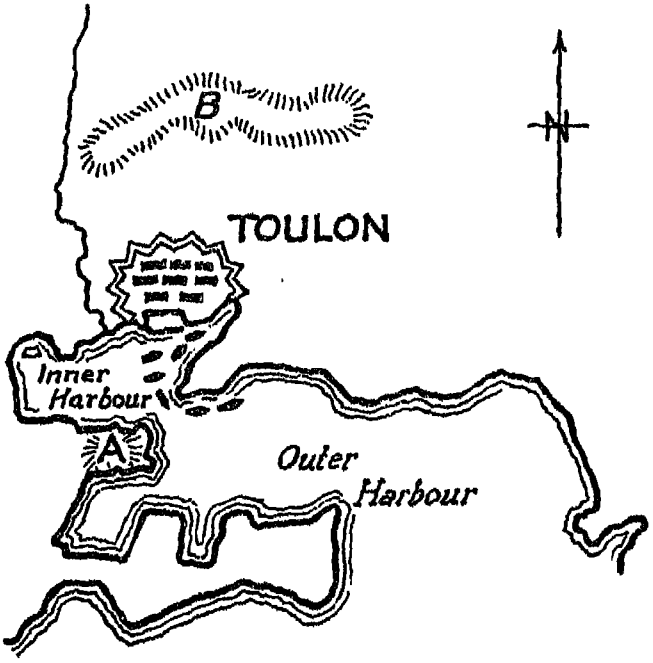
At the end of August, with assistance from people in the town, Toulon was occupied by the allies, and the forts surrounding it were prepared to withstand a siege.

The Revolutionary army which was stationed about Nice got immediate orders to proceed to the spot and retake it; at first only 12,000 men were available, but during the three and a half months which the siege lasted reinforcements poured in steadily, and towards the end there were 37,000.

There has been fierce controversy regarding the part which Napoleon took in the siege. Military writers rather hurry over this period, as they are anxious to get on to the big campaigns, from which lessons in strategy may be deduced. Biographers, on the other hand, have hunted up evidence to decide whether they can trace here the first signs of genius; they have, however, overlooked the best witnesses, which are the guns and the map. A study of these shows that there was no wonderful merit in the plan of operations, any subaltern of artillery would have solved the problem in the same way. But in the execution of that plan there was will-power and energy of the highest degree.

THE GUNS.—Any trained artillery officer on the spot would, of course, know the range of his guns, but it is

Toulon



Effective Gun Range 2000

Extreme Gun Range 4000

Scale

0 1 2 3 4 miles

Point A Promontory of Léguillete "The key of Toulon", the British made a fort here known as Fort Mulgrave.

Point B Mount Faron. There were small forts all round both the harbours.

difficult now to find any data from which we can estimate the power of those in use so long ago. In a book by General Antoni, dated 1789, the following figures are given:

	Point-blank	Extreme range
Musket	270 yards	1,348 yards
Guns 8 pounder	540 ,,	3,372 ,,
,, 16 ,,	540 ,,	3,541 ,,
,, 32 ,,	540 ,,	4,046 ,,

Scharnhorst gives some tables showing results of experiments in 1799, which agree fairly well with the above, but adds what he calls "effective range," which he gives as about 2,000 yards for the 16 pounder.

What the marksmanship was like it is impossible to say. The guns were smooth-bore muzzle-loaders, and apparently had no sights. Elsewhere there is a record that the British Admiralty sent some gun-sights to Nelson in 1801 for trial and report; but it seems he had no use for them; Nelson's idea of the proper range for a British gunner was something under 50 yards, and the proper target was a battleship; under these conditions it is difficult to score a miss, so the new-fangled sights would only waste time; the great thing was to fire two broadsides to the enemy's one.

It is not explained what "point-blank" for the musket means. It seems that fire was rarely opened at anything over 100 yards. We may guess that the average marksman might hit a battalion column at 200 yards, a haystack at 50, and a single man at 30.

THE MAP.—Taking effective range as 2,000 yards, the next thing is to study the map; there are two heights, A and B, which would immediately suggest themselves to the gunner of those days, who liked a commanding position. Guns on the slopes of B could just about reach the ships, but if these sheered off a little they would be out of range, and yet could assist in the defence of the town walls; B was therefore of little value as a position. But guns at A

would command the whole of the inner harbour, and if the ships moved away out of range they would no longer be able to assist in defence of the town; the allied fleets were the real defence of Toulon; therefore the possession of A was the decisive factor.

Napoleon was one of the very few trained officers in the army; it is therefore quite possible that the plan was his, but in any case there was no genius in it.

One account gives a dramatic description of a council of war: "putting his finger on the map and marking the selected spot, 'There,' he exclaimed, 'is the Key of Toulon'" and his hearers were so struck with the evident truth of an inspiration of genius in war, that they accepted, in part at least, the project."

Very likely his hearers were much impressed; Carteaux, the general commanding, was a painter; he was soon afterwards superseded by a doctor; history does not give an analysis of the others, but it may be surmised that there was more of the tinker and tailor than soldier about them; brave fellows, no doubt, with the fighting instinct of their gallant nation roused to fever heat by the dangers threatening their country—they will be real soldiers by-and-by when they have been through Rivoli and Marengo. But meanwhile, the painters and the doctors were much "struck," and the genius was allowed to have his way.

With terrific energy he collected cannon, shot, and powder from all the depots within a hundred miles; he established a small arsenal on the spot. More important still, he inspired the men by personal example; he built a battery so near Fort Mulgrave (A) that on the first day all its gunners were killed or wounded. "Call it the battery of the fearless," said Napoleon, and after that there was no lack of volunteers.

FALL OF TOULON.—Before the end of November General Dugommier arrived to take up command; he was a soldier, and, recognising that Napoleon was another, he gave him

full liberty of action. More batteries were built to surround Fort Mulgrave, and on the night of December 16th the storming party advanced to the assault; hand-to-hand fighting in the dark was desperate and confused, but at last the "Key to Toulon" was won. It was a simple example of Napoleon's maxim to concentrate against the decisive point. The allies fled hurriedly from all the other forts on the shore, and regained their ships, which began to weigh anchor, taking with them some royalist refugees. Without the fleets the town had no chance of holding out; the royalists who were left behind fell victims to the fury of the Revolution.

In the official despatches the name of Buonaparte appears among others, but with no special note. Marmont, another artillery officer, wrote long letters to his parents describing the siege, but never mentioned Napoleon's name. When Junot wrote to his father that he was going as aide-de-camp to General Buonaparte the latter replied, "Why do you quit your regiment? Who is General Buonaparte? Where has he served? Nobody ever heard of him." Even Arthur Lévy has to admit that the fame of Toulon was of a retrospective nature.

No matter—there was fame enough to come.

Toulon is not a glorious page in British history.

GENERAL OF BRIGADE.—Napoleon was promoted to be General of Brigade and Inspector of the Coast, with a residence at Nice. His friends point to Toulon as the sole reason for this advancement and claim it as a proof that his fame was already recognised. It seems probable, however, that it was also due to the fact that there were so few trained officers available; it is also noteworthy that two other officers from Toulon, of whom nothing is known but their names, were promoted at the same time.

He took the family to Nice, also the two real friends he had made at Toulon, Junot and Marmont. He made the

acquaintance of the younger Robespierre, who was what was called Commissioner of the Convention, a post of much importance and great power.

He was present at some minor operations with the so-called Army of Italy, which was watching the Austrians along the Maritime Alps, and he was sent on a mission to Genoa; this gave him opportunities to examine the roads and passes and to collect information which was of value to him later.

For six months all seemed well. Then the *coup d'état* of Thermidor brought another reverse of fortune; in July, '94, both the Robespierres and their supporters went to the guillotine, the *bonnet rouge* was whitewashed and it was the turn of the Terrorists to become "suspect." Napoleon's intimacy with the younger Robespierre was well known, and on August 10th he was flung into prison. His papers were seized and examined, but nothing was found to stamp him as a Terrorist, and on August 24th he was not only set at liberty, but was again employed with the Army of Italy.

PARIS.—In May, '95, he was called to Paris and got orders to take command of an infantry brigade in the army which was suppressing the royalists of La Vendée. This appointment was not at all to his taste; he looked on the infantry as an inferior branch to the artillery; fighting against his own countrymen was a loathsome idea. He argued with the War Office, and when this proved useless, he pleaded ill health—and remained on in Paris.

He now drew up a memorandum for operations in Italy, which showed such knowledge and skill that he was employed for a few weeks in the topographical bureau of the Committee of Public Safety. He applied to be sent to Turkey to organise the artillery of the Sultan. But evidently the War Office was getting tired of him, and on Sept. 15th his name was struck off the list of generals.

Prospects now looked very bad, but he does not seem to have been much depressed, and perhaps he felt that he

would get his chance before long. In three weeks after being deprived of his rank he was the most famous man in Paris.

VENDEMIAIRE.—After the fall of the Terrorists Paris heaved a sigh of relief, and then began that orgy of pleasure which Carlyle has so vividly pictured. But meanwhile, of course, there must be a new Constitution. The "Frogs of the Marsh," *Crapauds du Marais*, had sat silent while Robespierre's green eyes were on them, but now they started croaking on the dear old subject, a Constitution. Seven hundred and fifty deputies in two Houses; 250 of them, the eldest, to form the Council of Ancients; the remainder the Council of the Five Hundred; the Executive to consist of five Directors. Of these, only three need claim attention. Barras, an unlovely figure, who not only played the blackguard with women but wrote about them afterwards; he joined the Directory in November, '05. Carnot, who organised victory, but was no great statesman. Rewbell, unscrupulous but shrewd—pity that Rewbell has left us no portrait of Napoleon, he had eyes to see and could speak the truth when it suited him. A rotten government, more corrupt and less capable than its predecessors, but taking its tone from public opinion and trying to whitewash its sins. There was to be freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of labour. Well, even this was more than any other Constitution had given, so France bore with the Directory for four years.

The new Constitution had a clause which ordained that the two Councils should take two-thirds of their numbers from the old Convention, leaving only one-third to be elected by the people. This by no means suited the political adventurers of Paris, and agitators got busy among all the discontented elements, chiefly royalists and members of the old Gironde; the National Guards were persuaded to join the conspiracy, and the Sections were organised for an

armed rising. What this heterogeneous mob wanted is not at all clear, probably few of them had any idea; but the first step, as usual, was to be destructive—the overthrow of the Directors and the Councils—after that it would be time enough to think of a constructive policy.

On Oct. 4th the regular troops were paraded, by order of the Directors, to suppress rioting, but after some parleying they were withdrawn, and the Sections, remaining in position, seemed to be masters of the situation.

The unhappy Directors were now at their wits' end; they began by ordering the arrest of two or three generals; then Barras was invested with the supreme command. But Barras, though brave, was not the man to dominate chaos, and he knew it; he had been at Toulon and had met there Captain Buonaparte. A hurried message was sent and the man appeared; Barras took him on one side and offered him the post of second-in-command.

Some people think that Napoleon accepted with alacrity, as if he had foreseen the offer and made up his mind. Arthur Lévy and others say he hesitated. It would be a sweet revenge on these men who had degraded him to leave them to follow Robespierre, but the autocrat that was in him revolted at the thought of the anarchy which must follow; as he himself had said in the *Souper de Beaucaire*, in time of crisis the patriot must support the existing government.

At all events he accepted what was really the command, and lost no time after that. A dashing cavalry officer, Murat, was sent off at a gallop to bring in artillery from the camp at Sablons; 4,000 regulars were posted to defend the Tuileries—but in the place of the vacillating Louis XVI there was now a real commander. In a few hours everything was ready, and when the 40,000 of the Sections poured from the by-streets towards the palace they found themselves looking down the muzzles of cannon. For some time, the two parties stood face to face and there were parleyings. Then shots were fired from a house near the

Church of St. Roch and the "whiff of grape-shot" was let loose. The result was scarcely in doubt for one moment, and the fact that there were barely a couple of hundred casualties on each side shows that it only wanted unhesitating action to disperse such a mob.

General Buonaparte was recognised as the man of the day; "he seemed to be everywhere at once; he surprised people by his laconic, clear, and prompt orders; everybody was struck by his arrangements and passed from admiration to confidence, and from confidence to enthusiasm." This was no simple problem such as had confronted him at Toulon, to be solved by a little technical knowledge; it was a problem in psychology, which called for a genius who could dominate men.

Such was Vendémiaire, October 5th, 1795.

Napoleon was now a made man; his name was on every tongue; he was promoted to be General of Division, thanked by the Councils, and, sincerest compliment of all, was regarded with jealousy by the Directors whom he had just saved. Fortunately for them he decided that the "pear was not yet ripe," so he did not follow up his triumph by trying to grasp supreme power; but there is little doubt that he began to see his way towards it.

Many people can find nothing but personal ambition in his move towards autocracy—I prefer to look on it as patriotism. In six years France had seen the fall of the Bastille, the September massacres, the execution of the King, the processions to the scaffold, invasions in the North, risings in the West and South, anarchy everywhere; a glorious nation torn by faction and distracted by the violence and weakness of successive governments. Democracy, beautiful in theory, had been put to the test of practice, and had done nothing but guillotine itself. With his instinct of a soldier Napoleon believed that a solid government was the only thing that could restore France to her

proper place; with sublime self-confidence he saw that he himself could be that solid government. In less than ten years he brought France out of chaos into the first place in Europe.

For the present, however, the pear was unripe.

MARRIAGE.—Though women took up a good deal of Napoleon's life they had a very small share in his career. There were Delilahs, but they did not cut his hair or hand him over to his enemies; there were Pompadours, but they did not rule his Court or appoint his Ministers.

When he wanted to play Romeo he selected a Juliet as calmly as if he had been a theatrical manager; and in the first scene of the play there was very little diffidence or delicacy. Later on his acting might convince himself, he might even allow Juliet to convince him. But the illusion was short-lived, and when he came down from the balcony the brief play was over. In fact it had never been anything more than an interlude.

There were many such interludes, and the more important of them are noted later in Part IV.

For some time Napoleon had been thinking of marriage, but it was of marriage for its own sake—a *mariage de convenance*, without any particular bride in view. He had been in the habit of visiting Madame Permon's house. When that lady became a widow he made her a serious proposal, which, however, only caused amusement, in the same way as the Puss in Boots had amused her daughter ten years earlier. Napoleon retired hurt.

About a month later Vendémiaire gave a new turn to his thoughts; he now had a future in front of him, and a *dot*, though still desirable, was no longer an indispensable clause of the marriage contract. He wanted a lady who could help him in his ambitions, and very naturally looked for her in the *salons* of the gay capital.

Paris lived on intrigues, political and otherwise; the

strings were pulled in the famous *salons* of Madame de Staël, Madame Récamier, and Madame Tallien. The first of these was supposed to be a temple of literature and philosophy; in the second homage was paid to the beauty of the hostess, and also to the wealth of her husband, who had a reputation as a financier. But at this period the most powerful *salon* was that of the fair and frail Madame Tallien. This lady was known as "Notre Dame de Thermidor"; in '94 she had been arrested as *suspect*, and from prison she had managed to send out letters to Monsieur Tallien, who was still at liberty, appealing to him to save her and to save himself. Carlyle thinks that her appeals contributed to nerve Tallien in his desperate stand against Robespierre; it is certain that he was one of the leaders of the *coup* of Thermidor.

Madame Tallien was hailed as the queen of the society of Paris and held her Court in the house of Barras, who was one of her lovers. Politicians and financiers, *jeunesse dorée* and *incroyables*, filled it with gaiety and corruption. Among the crowd might be seen a slim figure of rather unkempt appearance, who had become famous as "le Général Vendémiaire."

There is some evidence that Napoleon first proposed to the beautiful hostess herself; but she was not prepared to give up her position for so uncouth a figure as the young hero, however great his fame.

There was, however, another lady who could not afford to be so particular. This was La Beauharnais. Some notes about her will be found in Part IV.

In the *Mémorial de Sainte Hélène* Napoleon has given his version of the courtship.

> "It was during his command at Paris that Napoleon made the acquaintance of Mme de Beauharnais. The general disarmament of the Sections had been carried out. There appeared at headquarters a young man from ten

to twelve years of age, who came to beg the Commander-in-Chief to return to him the sword of his father, formerly general in the Republican service. This young man was Eugéne de Beauharnais, afterwards Viceroy of Italy. Napoleon, touched by the nature of this request, and by his youthful grace, granted his request. Eugéne began to weep at the sight of his father's sword. The General was affected and showed him so much kindness that Mme de Beauharnais felt obliged to call next day to express her gratitude. Napoleon hastened the return of her visit. Everyone knows the extreme grace of the Empress Josephine and her sweet and attractive manners. The acquaintance soon became intimate, and they were married without delay."

Considerable doubt has been thrown on this little romance, but there seems to be no evidence to reject it. At all events it is true that "the acquaintance became very intimate."

It is scarcely possible to believe that Napoleon had any illusions either about her past or her present situation. Her relationship to Barras, if not an open scandal, was a very open secret. But she was a Vicomtesse, she knew everybody in Paris, and was deservedly popular.

There is no doubt that, once he found himself playing the lover, Napoleon was carried away by the part, and his infatuation was complete.

On the side of Josephine it was an affair "*de convenance*"—her behaviour during his absence in Italy is sufficient proof of this. She knew that his worldly goods consisted of "nothing but his cloak and sword," but though he could not pay his wife's debts she might be able to incur some fresh ones—and that was good enough for Josephine.

The civil ceremony took place on March 9th, 1796. To reduce the difference in their ages Napoleon registered his as 28 and Josephine's as 29; the correct figures were 26 and 32.

Two days later, General Bonaparte—for he henceforth spelt his name thus—tore himself away to take up command of the Army of Italy.

Some authors have asserted that he obtained this appointment as a reward for marrying the discarded mistress of Barras. It is true that Barras had some say in the appointments in the army, and that Josephine was quite capable of intriguing on behalf of her *fiancé*. But there were other and better reasons why Napoleon should have been selected. His performance at Vendémiaire had marked him as a soldier of resolution: he was a popular hero in Paris, so much so as to be a possible rival to the Directors, who would therefore be glad, while rewarding his services, to see him removed from the capital: he had reconnoitred the theatre of war and had drawn up a plan of operations.

It seems very probable that even if he had never seen Josephine the appointment would still have been made.

CHAPTER IV

Rivoli

Surely the First Italian Campaign was the most brilliant of all Napoleon's achievements. It is true that at Marengo, Austerlitz, and Jena victory was more rapid and more decisive, and in some cases, such as 1814, the numerical odds against him were greater. But in these later wars he had advantages which on this occasion were entirely absent.

In the first place, he was afterwards Head of the State as well as Commander of the Army, and therefore had a free hand in all respects; he made war when he liked and chose his moment for beginning operations, thus giving himself time for the previous preparation which he thought so essential. In '96 he was under the Directors, who feared and disliked him, not without reason; if he were successful they hoped to reap the benefit; but if he failed they would find some consolation in hanging him; he was working with a rope round his neck, and anyone with less self-confidence would have felt the strain. He was forced to take immediate action and his advance began only a fortnight after his arrival at Headquarters.

Secondly, the Army of Italy was in a deplorable condition, badly fed, badly clothed, badly equipped, and not paid at all. In such circumstances what discipline could be expected? How different were the troops he led at Austerlitz!

Thirdly, he afterwards enjoyed the full confidence of his enthusiastic army. But in '96 the senior officers, most of them considerably older than himself, began with jealousy

and suspicion; this young Buonaparte had handled some guns at Toulon and had dispersed a street brawl in Paris, but what could he know of cavalry or infantry, what experience had he of operations in the field? The rank and file knew nothing about him, and his slight and insignificant figure was not calculated to inspire confidence at first sight.

In later campaigns he took his part well, but on this occasion he did everything.

Italy was at that time anything but a united nation. In the north Lombardy was under the rule of the foreigners from Austria, with their capital at Milan. Victor Amadeus, King of Sardinia, ruled over the island of that name and over Piedmont; his capital was at Turin. In the centre of the Peninsula lay the Papal States, and at the foot was the kingdom of Naples, where a disreputable branch of the disreputable Bourbons was being bolstered up by Nelson and his fleet. Besides these larger states there were principalities like Modena and Parma, and independent cities like Venice and Genoa. Fear of the Revolution had driven Sardinia into a loose alliance with Austria; and the other states, from the same reason, were sympathetic with Austria, though they gave no armed assistance.

The Austrians, under the veteran Beaulieu, mustered about 32,000, and were in quarters to the north of Genoa. The Sardinian army, under Colli, was 20,000 strong, and was spread along the northern slopes of the Maritime Alps, watching the passes that led from the coast and covering their capital, Turin.

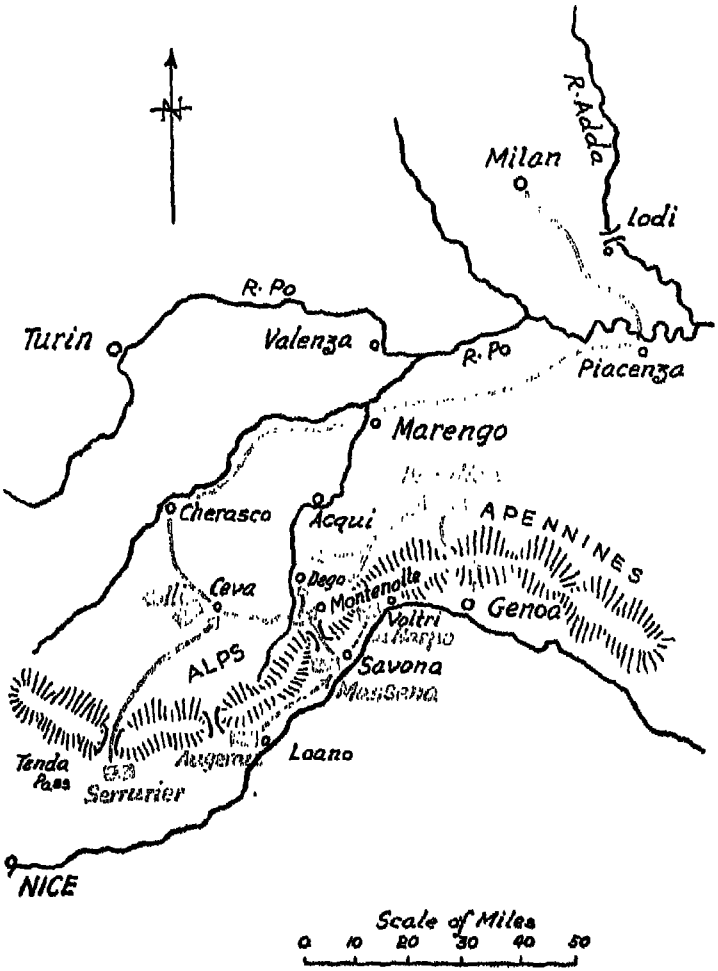
PREVIOUS PREPARATIONS.—Napoleon arrived at Nice on March 27th. There was little time for preparation, but he did what he could by punishing the contractors for supplies and raising loans from banks to give his men a fraction of their overdue pay. His most important step was to issue the ever-famous Proclamation. "Soldiers, you are half-starved and half-naked. The Government owes you much, but can do nothing for you. Your patience and

courage are honourable to you, but they procure you neither honour nor glory. I lead you to the most fertile valleys of the world; there you will find flourishing cities; there you will reap honour, glory, and riches. Soldiers of the Army of Italy, will you lack courage?" The promise of such glory, combined with loot, was a powerful inducement to the soldiers of the Republic.

DISPERSE TO FEED.—On his arrival Napoleon found his ragged army already dispersed to feed, or, rather, to try to feed itself. It numbered about 40,000 and was strung out from Nice along the coast to within twenty miles of Genoa. Its situation was fraught with danger. In its front lay the ridge of the Maritime Alps, prolonged from near Savona by the Apennines. His opponents, who were collectively superior in numbers, could manœuvre unseen behind this screen of mountains. At his back lay the sea, commanded by the British fleet; cruisers occasionally came in near enough to shell the coast road. In such circumstances anything like a defeat would spell disaster.

INTERIOR LINES.—There were just two factors in Napoleon's favour; first, he knew the ground from personal observation, and, second, his opponents were divided into two separate forces, under commanders independent of each other. He made this latter his trump suit and played it for all it was worth; if once he could drive a wedge between the allies they would retire in different directions—the Austrians north-eastward towards their own supply depots, the Sardinians north-westward to cover Turin. This would put him in his favourite position on Interior Lines, and give him an opportunity to defeat them in detail. Such a veteran as Beaulieu was not likely to overlook this possibility, and he wrote on the subject to Colli, but pointed out that if Napoleon pushed in between them he would find himself in the jaws of a nutcracker and *he will not dare!* The Austrians had yet to learn the daring of the Young Adventurer!

1796


R. Adda
Milan
Lodi
R. Po
Turin
Valenza
R. Po
Piacenza
Marengo
Cherasco
Acqui
APENNINES
Ceva
Dego
Montenotte
Genoa
Voltri
ALPS
Savona
Mont Settepani
Tenda Pass
Argentera
Loano
Serrurier
NICE
Scale of Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50

The mountain range was in some ways an advantage, in others a nasty obstacle. There were only five passes, and of these only one, leading north from Savona, was a good road for the cannon and vehicles of an army. An attack up one road exposes the head of the column to converging fire from the defenders. But the attackers had a good road all along the coast, they could feint in one direction and then concentrate quickly for an attack elsewhere; while the defenders had to watch all the five passes, and, as there was no road along the top of the ridge, their various detachments could not arrive in time to support each other until after the attacker had delivered his first assault.

We have here a fine example of the value of the initiative and offensive action. If Beaulieu could have concerted with Colli for a bold converging attack, in Von Moltke's method, all the odds would have been in their favour. They preferred to play for what looked like safety, awaiting events, and thus surrendered the initiative to Napoleon, who made full use of it.

PHASE OF MANŒUVRE.—A detachment was pushed along to Voltri, thus threatening Genoa. Genoa was nominally a neutral and independent city, but the Army of the Republic had little respect for neutrality and might very well be expected to pay it a visit. Beaulieu therefore sent a detachment to block the way, thus further dispersing his forces. This was Napoleon's opportunity. He immediately concentrated towards Savona, and on April 11th the real advance began. The French already had a small post on the crest of the ridge; this was attacked by an Austrian force under Argentau, but held its ground. Next day, April 12th, the French main body came up and pushed the Austrians back, defeating them at Montenotte. The engagement at this place was little more than a glorified skirmish, but in the imagination and memory of Napoleon it was an affair of real importance; it was his first victory in the field, and as such remained dear to him. It is true

that if he had met with a reverse on this day it would probably have altered the campaign, perhaps the whole of his career, and with it the history of Europe, and therefore it would be wrong to say that its importance was magnified.

Having now secured a footing on the ridge, Napoleon could develop his manœvures on Interior Lines. His right wing was formed of La Harpe's division, which was in touch with the Austrians. On his left was Augerau, facing the Sardinians; farther still to the left was Serrurier, who had advanced by the Col de Tenda but had not yet joined up. In the centre were the reserves, consisting chiefly of Massena's division.

As the Austrians had retired to Dego, some ten miles to the north-east, he first swung his reserves to the left. On the 13th Augerau attacked the Sardinians, who held the fortress of Cossaria for one day and then retired.

On the 14th the reserves were directed to the right. La Harpe, reinforced by Massena, attacked the Austrians at Dego and took the town.

On the 15th a curious incident took place. Five battalions of Austrians who had been ordered to Dego stumbled down from the mountains into the town, quite unaware that the French had already occupied it. They found the French troops "dispersed to feed," also to drink. A panic followed, and the Austrians had no difficulty in driving them out of the town. Late the same evening, however, Massena advanced again and repaired the disaster, inflicting severe losses on his opponents as they retired.

Beaulieu was now thoroughly alarmed, and, thinking only of the safety of his own army, gave orders for a concentration at Acqui, fifteen miles farther back.

Napoleon had thus driven a wedge between his opponents; he calculated that he had at least four clear days in which to deal with the Sardinians before the Austrians could intervene, and therefore prepared for a decisive blow towards the left

DECISIVE MOVEMENT.—Massena's whole force was hurried to the left to reinforce Augerau; Serrurier had already joined up on the extreme left. Napoleon had therefore three-quarters of his force, about 30,000, to deal with the 20,000 Sardinians—"superior forces at the decisive point." On May 19th there were straggling fights along this front. Colli had a strongly fortified position at Ceva, but after holding it for one day he retired, and on the 23rd, fearing that the French could not be kept out of Turin, he sent to ask for a "suspension of arms."

Napoleon replied that the Directors reserved to themselves the power to treat, and therefore the plenipotentiaries of Sardinia must go to Paris, or await those of France at Genoa; but, as this would take time, he would grant an immediate suspension of arms if two fortresses were handed over to him. Colli had to refer this to his King at Turin —and it was not until May 28th that the armistice was signed at Cherasco.

CHERASCO.—This armistice of Cherasco has scarcely received the attention it deserves, and even those authors who have gone into the details of it have not appreciated its true significance.

General La Tour and his Chief of Staff, Da Costa (who has left an account of the proceedings), appeared as plenipotentiaries of the Sardinians, and, as is usual in such cases, began by producing their credentials. To them entered one young officer, not yet twenty-seven years of age, as sole representative of the French Republic; when asked for his credentials of course he had none, in fact he had definite orders not to make any form of treaty; but the story goes that he pointed through the window to the French bivouacs and said, "There are my credentials, fifty thousand of them!" This was a lie to begin with—he never had more than 40,000 men altogether, and certainly not more than 30,000 could have been anywhere near. The Sardinians, however, were not in a position to argue the point, and then

it seems to have struck them that it was quite unnecessary to argue; this young Frenchman was no doubt a clever soldier, but could scarcely have any experience in diplomacy, and so the more experienced La Tour might score a point. Besides which, the situation might change later on, and in that case it would be convenient to be able to repudiate the treaty, on the ground that Napoleon was not a properly accredited representative of the French Government. La Tour therefore waived any objections he might have made, and proceeded to business.

The treaty consisted of three simple clauses; the French were to be given three fortresses to secure their position on the northern side of the passes; the Sardinians were to provide certain supplies for the French troops; but, as the latter were already helping themselves liberally, this clause was rather to the advantage of the Sardinians, who might hope that it would reduce promiscuous looting. The third clause granted Napoleon the right to march his army through Sardinian territory to cross the Po at Valenza; it was to be a secret clause and Napoleon is said to have laid great stress on this secrecy.

General La Tour had no wish to see the French marching farther through the territory of his good King, so he took the opportunity of giving a little advice on strategy, pointing out that Valenza was quite the wrong point to aim at. Napoleon cut him short by saying that the Directors, when giving him the command, had judged him capable of recognising what were the best interests of the Republic, and that, in any case, he had no need of advice from an enemy. This admitted of no reply. After some haggling the three clauses were accepted.

The Sardinians had grumbled at the terms but were probably relieved to get off so lightly; their capital at least was saved though they could scarcely have defended it.

To the French army the terms seemed altogether too easy; they had marched and fought and won, they were

looking forward to the loot of Turin, and now Napoleon had thrown away the fruits of victory and spared a monarchy which he might have crushed. There were whispers that he had been bribed!

Napoleon, however, was looking further ahead and flying at higher game. Events fell out exactly as he had planned them. He got his three fortresses and supplies for his army, and General La Tour informed Beaulieu in strictest confidence that the French were going to cross the Po at Valenza. Acting on this reliable information Beaulieu concentrated, not at Valenza itself, but a few miles to the north, intending no doubt to fall on the French when they were half across the river.

Meanwhile Napoleon, who never had any intention of crossing at Valenza, was moving by forced marches to Piacenza, fifty miles farther down the Po; before Beaulieu realised how he had been duped the French had brushed aside the weak cavalry patrols who were watching the north bank, and had firmly established themselves there, on May 7th.

There was now no river or mountain range between Napoleon and his first great objective, which was the very important city of Milan.

Beaulieu, finding the French almost at his back, was alarmed for his communications, and made a hurried retreat towards Mantua.

General La Tour had been perfectly correct in telling Napoleon that Valenza would be a bad point of crossing; Beaulieu himself would have probably expected Piacenza to be the spot selected if he had not been influenced by the information he received from La Tour. But Napoleon was confident that the more fuss he made about secrecy the more certain it would be that the secret would be passed on. His confidence was justified by the result.

But the cream of the jest has yet to come. The Austrians, having waited in vain for the expected crossing at Valenza,

laid the blame on the unhappy La Tour and accused him of having sold them to the French. It would be interesting to know what passed between them when the *dénouement* took place; we can imagine that La Tour protested that he had never meant to betray the Austrians, he had only meant to betray Napoleon; this was the truth, but—as sometimes happens in this wicked world to people who tell the simple truth—he had no chance of being believed. The Austrians could not wait to argue, they had to look after themselves and hurry homewards; there is no doubt that they parted with their late allies on the worst possible terms.

This was a distinct and personal triumph for Napoleon; he had driven a wedge between the armies of his opponents, and now he had driven a moral wedge between their Governments; each blamed the other for the combined failure; if the Austrians had supported Colli, the Sardinians would not have been left at the mercy of the French; on the other hand, if the Sardinians had not laid down arms and made their mistake at Cherasco, Napoleon would have had great difficulty in crossing the Po; it is an unfordable river and he had no pontoon train. The Sardinians had indeed no love for the French, who had lately wrested Savoy from them and had proclaimed their intention to wipe out all the monarchies of Europe; they had good reason to fear that their own monarchy might be the first to go. Now, however, they were even more afraid of the vengeance of the powerful Austrians, and never wanted to see them back again; they were therefore well enough content to see the French drive them away. Napoleon had changed them from treacherous neutrals into fairly honest, if lukewarm, friends.

Most important of all from the personal point of view was the effect on the Directors; if they denounced Napoleon for exceeding his orders they would rouse the whole nation, which was already on his side; if, on the other hand, they

ratified his armistice it would imply that he was entitled to make such arrangements without consulting them. They wisely chose the latter course, and Napoleon was free to repeat such manœuvres—which he did.

LODI.—Yet another personal triumph was to follow a few days later.

Beaulieu was making for Mantua, which was his chief arsenal and supply depot in Italy; reinforcements might be expected to join him there from Austria; but he left a strong rear-guard at Lodi to prevent the French crossing the River Adda and harrying his retreat. It seems that Napoleon did not want to bring about a big battle at once, he preferred to begin by occupying Milan and fixing up a new and shorter line of communications with France through Switzerland; he had written to the Directors asking for reinforcements from the Army of the Rhine. In fact each of the generals was content for the moment to avoid the other. It is not quite clear, in these circumstances, why Napoleon should have thought it worth while to risk so difficult a task as the capture of the crossing at Lodi, especially as he believed at first that he had the whole of Beaulieu's army in front of him; presumably he considered it dangerous to leave the enemy in possession of a bridge threatening the flank of his march on Milan. The fight took place on May 10th; the bridge, 200 yards long, was swept by artillery and musketry fire from the eastern bank; the rear-guard of 6,000 Austrians was posted to oppose the crossing.

After resting his troops Napoleon formed a strong column of grenadiers to rush the bridge, and, in spite of all opposition, they forced their way across.

Legend represents Napoleon himself as seizing one of the regimental colours and leading the charge in person; other evidence shows that it was Lannes and Berthier who led the way—and the latter version seems now to be accepted. The facts, however, are not so important as the impression which was left on the minds of the troops, and there is no

doubt about this—it was Napoleon who was hailed as the hero of the day, and no one else had any share of the glory.

This was really important, for it struck the first note of that personal popularity which afterwards became such a strong factor in his operations. The rank and file had only known, in a vague way, that he was the general who had led them to success; they could not appreciate the finer points of his strategy, they even felt that the Armistice of Cherasco had been a mistake. But they could appreciate a reputation for personal gallantry; sitting round their bivouac fires they could repeat the story of Lodi, no doubt with embellishments, as is the way not only among French soldiers. He was no longer a mere general in command, he was the leader of men, their comrade, the Little Corporal.

Napoleon afterwards said that it was Lodi which first raised in him the belief of a great future. But, like many of his reminiscences, this must be taken with reserve; he had been dreaming dreams all his life, though perhaps not quite such ambitious ones as now came to him.

No effort was made to follow up the Austrians. Milan was entered in triumph on May 15th.

This marks the end of the first stage of this Campaign, and it is convenient here to review the achievements up to date.

By will-power and organisation Napoleon had moulded a ragged mob into fighting shape; by clever tactics he had thrust a wedge between his opponents and surmounted a formidable range of mountains; by quick manœuvre he had always got superiority of numbers on the field of battle; he had forced one enemy to sue for peace; he had tricked the other enemy into leaving open the way across a big river; he had installed himself as the popular hero in his army and in France; he had made himself a serious rival to the Directors; he had occupied the richest town in Italy.

All in six weeks! Practically all by his individual efforts.

In many campaigns the chief credit belongs to the troops who do the actual fighting, in some cases their courage and fighting qualities have repaired the mistakes of their generals. In other cases it is the combined effort of all ranks that has led to success. It is very rarely that the genius of the leader outweighs all the other factors. But it was so in this case. It was instinct that enabled him to feel the pulse, as it were, of his opponents. Of course Beaulieu and Colli should have joined hands; they themselves knew this; but Napoleon knew still better that their separate interests would keep them apart and upset any attempt at combination; he played on their nerves with a sure touch, and it was his foresight which justified the risks he ran and enabled him to go from step to step with a clear general plan in front of him.

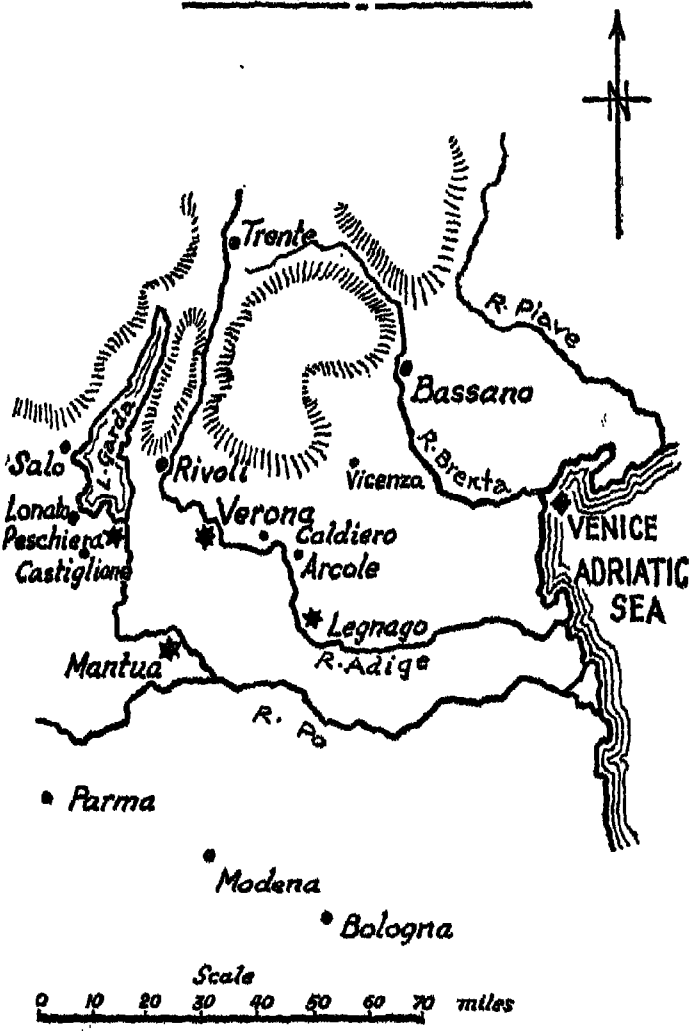
All done by a youth of twenty-six, and in his first campaign!

RAIDS.—The Campaign lasted another year, but while the main energies of the French were turned against the Austrians round Mantua they also overran the states of Northern Italy. Columns were sent to Parma, Modena, Bologna, and towards Rome. Wherever he went Napoleon hastened to assure the populace that he came as a liberator, and at first he was welcomed as such; the smaller states were eager to get rid of their rulers and to become "free" under the wing of France; many old abuses were swept away, and Italy was invigorated by the spirit of reform.

Before long, however, the Italians found that liberty cost them a good deal in hard cash. The Pope paid a contribution of thirty-seven millions, and the other states smaller sums.

Though Napoleon took no artistic joy in the masterpieces of great painters, he recognised their value; Paris was enriched by countless pictures, sculptures, and rare manuscripts. It is hard to say how far this wholesale plunder

1796-97


N
Trente
R. Piave
Bassano
L. Garda
Salo
Rivoli
Vicenza
R. Brenta
Lonato
Peschiera
Castiglione
Verona
Caldiero
Arcole
VENICE
ADRIATIC SEA
Legnago
R. Adige
Mantua
R. Po
Parma
Modena
Bologna
Scale
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 miles

was prompted by the Directors, but, at all events, Napoleon had no shame about it, and the only mitigating fact is that he took little for himself—he always preferred glory and power to wealth. The Treasury, the Directors, and the generals all had their share; Massena in particular was the first in plunder as he was in war. The rapacity shown by the French degrades them from the position of liberators to that of selfish conquerors.

These extortions, coupled with the requisition of supplies, soon disenchanted the inhabitants, and there were several risings which had to be repressed with severity.

THE FIGHTS FOR MANTUA.—The Campaign against the Austrians is simple in its broad outlines but intricate in detail.

Mantua was the centre of operations, and the Austrians clung tenaciously to this, their last stronghold in Italy. The French besieged it early in June, and to cover the siege they took up a line on the Adige, holding the fortresses of Legnago, Verona, and Peschiera.

The Austrians made four separate attempts to save Mantua; but they were much hampered by the difficulties of descending from the mountains into the plain of Italy. The roads ran in narrow defiles which made the movement of large forces very slow. They therefore made use of three lines of advance; the western line through Salo, on the west of Lake Garda; the centre one down the valley of the Adige, through Rivoli; the eastern one, in more open ground, through Bassano and Vicenza. They had superior numbers and the advantage of the initiative.

Napoleon held the lower ends of the defiles and was thus on Interior Lines. It was by skilful use of this position that he was able, though sometimes sore pressed, to hold his own.

The first attempt of the Austrians was made in July and August. Wurmser had taken up the command in place

of Beaulieu, and he descended in two columns, one on each side of the lake. Napoleon was outnumbered and found himself in serious danger; in desperation he spiked his guns round Mantua, raised the siege, and concentrated at the southern end of the lake. He first dealt with the western column of the Austrians and drove them back from Lonato to Salo. Then he turned on the other column and defeated it at Castiglione on August 5th; Augereau was the hero of this battle. Wurmser retired northwards and the French resumed the siege of Mantua.

Wurmser made a second attempt in September. The French had pushed northwards as far as Trente. Leaving a detachment to hold them there, Wurmser slipped round by the eastern route; after some fighting at Bassano and Legnago he succeeded in getting into Mantua. But this was of very little use, for Napoleon sent down two divisions to reinforce the besiegers, and Wurmser was shut up in the fortress along with the former garrison.

The third attempt was made in November, by a General Alvinzi. He advanced with 50,000 men by the centre and eastern routes. Napoleon attacked the eastern column at Caldiero on Nov. 12th, but was repulsed and thrown back on Verona. He then determined on a very daring turning movement; he left a small garrison in Verona, and marched down the Adige, with the idea of crossing the river to Arcole and getting behind the Austrian position at Caldiero. The banks of the Adige were very marshy, and the troops could only move on the roads which ran on raised dykes. On Nov. 15th and 16th Napoleon tried to force his way to Arcole, but failed. With extraordinary persistence he ordered a third attempt on the 17th and was completely successful. He had sent a few cavalry trumpeters to conceal themselves on the flank of the Austrians; when they sounded the "Charge" the enemy was seized with panic and left the bridge open to the French infantry. Alvinzi saw he was outmanœuvred and withdrew in haste to Bassano.

Napoleon received some much needed reinforcements which brought his numbers up to 45,000.

Alvinzi, having reorganised, made a last advance by the centre route. At Rivoli, on Jan. 13th, he came up against Joubert's division; thinking that he had only a single division in front of him he spread his forces out widely to envelop it.

But during the night Napoleon brought up two more divisions, and from a more concentrated position he checked the Austrian left and dealt a heavy blow at their centre. The Austrians were completely defeated and fled in disorder, with a loss of nearly 15,000 and most of their guns.

On Feb. 2nd Wurmser capitulated in Mantua with 16,000 men and 350 guns.

Napoleon was now able to collect his whole force for an advance into Austria; there he hoped to meet other French forces under Moreau, who had been operating in the valley of the Danube. The Austrians retired fighting. Napoleon pressed them back to within fifty miles of Vienna, but then, finding that Moreau was still far distant, he agreed to an armistice. The preliminaries were signed at Leoben on April 18th.

While covering the siege of Mantua Napoleon had been obliged to adopt a defensive attitude which did not suit his methods or his impatience; he was better when he could seize the initiative and force his opponents to conform to his movements. Consequently, while awaiting their attacks, he was not at his best. But his resolution was magnificent, and he pulled himself through several awkward moments by his wonderful driving power; some of the marches performed by the French were almost incredible. Napoleon must be given credit for realising what his troops were capable of doing.

THE PEACE.—After the armistice Napoleon remained six months in Italy till the Peace was finally signed at Campo Formio, fifty miles north of Venice.

It was for him a period of hard work which called forth all his powers of organisation and diplomacy. The whole of Northern Italy was in his hands, but he was not yet in a position to annex it for France. Lombardy and some of the minor states were made into the Cisalpine Republic. Piedmont was left to the Sardinians, in accordance with the treaty which was based on the terms of Cherasco. The wealthy oligarchy of Genoa was reformed into a moderate democracy and called the Ligurian Republic.

Nominally France gained little; she received the Austrian province of Belgium, and the Emperor Francis secretly agreed to her occupation of the German provinces on the west bank of the Rhine; this consolidated France within her "natural frontiers," the Alps and the Rhine. But in addition to this many millions of francs had been sent to the treasury of Paris, and the young republics of Northern Italy were, to a great extent, dependent states.

Austria was treated leniently. As a compensation for Belgium she received Venice, with its territory on the mainland as far as the Adige. Thus was overthrown the oligarchy in the proud city which, for a thousand years, had been Queen of the Adriatic.

This transfer of an independent state to the dominions of an ancient monarchy was, of course, in opposition to all the principles of the Revolution and of liberty. An excuse was found in the behaviour of the Venetians; maddened by the extortions of Napoleon they had risen against the French and murdered some soldiers in Verona. But the real reason appears to have been that Napoleon was already thinking of the East; he, therefore, wanted a solid peace with Austria, which would allow him to take his troops out of Italy.

In the whole of the negotiations, which were not concluded without much argument, Napoleon acted as the sole representative of France. But he was not the representative of the wishes of the Directors; in several instances he

set at naught their definite instructions, and his attitude towards them showed an extraordinary insight into the political situation of France.

In July, '97, another crisis had arisen in Paris. The royalists, moderates, and malcontents had a majority in the Councils and were opposed to the Directors. Napoleon was well informed, and he recognised the weakness and unpopularity of the Government; but though he was willing to allow the moderate spirit to develop, he feared that royalist reaction might go too far. He therefore decided to prop up the Directors until such time as he himself could take their place. To avoid appearing as a Military Dictator he sent Augereau to do his work for him.

Augereau was a clumsy diplomatist, as Napoleon was well aware, but an ardent Republican; he placed troops in the important points of Paris, invaded the Chambers and marched the royalist Deputies off to prison. This was the *coup d'état* of Fructidor (Sept. 4th), which saved the Directory for the time being. But it left the balance of power in the unseen hand of Napoleon. It was the army of France which had saved the Directors; henceforward they must rely on it against the civil population. And Napoleon was the representative of the army.

CHAPTER V

EGYPT

THE reputation of Napoleon is so high that it casts a glamour over his mistakes, and military commentators are shy about criticising the Great Master. It must be admitted, however, that the Expedition to Egypt comes upon us as a shock. In Italy we had him at his best; it is easy to be carried away by that energy and judgment, that daring and foresight; it is easy to share the admiration of the army which installed him as its hero. Having formed a preliminary estimate we naturally expect our hero to confirm it at the next opportunity. We find, indeed, plenty of energy and courage, but these are to be found in all true soldiers; where is the judgment and foresight that lifts the genius above the common level, the judgment which directs the energy, the foresight which alone can justify risks? The very conception of the Expedition was a wilful error, its execution was faulty, its end was in disaster and dishonour.

It may be argued on the other side that such criticism takes its colour from the light of after events; in any case it is a matter of opinion. But if the bare facts are taken in logical sequence they will speak for themselves.

First we must look for the origin of the campaign. The pretexts for making war may be divided under three headings—first, self-defence; second, an incident such as the violation of a treaty or some other act of violence; third, an object to be gained, such as the conquest of territory or the establishment of a colony. Modern pacifists refuse to

admit the validity of any of these pretexts; such views were not in vogue a century ago, but even in those days it was demanded that the object to be gained should be sufficiently definite and desirable to compensate for the loss of life, the expenditure of money, and the other risks involved.

It would be absurd to suggest that the Expedition to Egypt was undertaken in self-defence. Egypt at that time was under the nominal soverainty of the Sultan, who was not at war with France; in reality it was ruled by an oligarchy of the Mamelukes, who were a military caste; they had neither the means nor the wish to make war with France.

There was no incident worth considering; it was indeed proclaimed that the Mamelukes had "encouraged British trade, and allowed the British to seize some French ships in their harbours!" Can such a flimsy excuse be seriously put forward to justify the despatch of so great a force?

What was the object to be gained? There was much talk about the establishment of an Oriental Realm of some sort, but had it any definite shape, even in the mind of Napoleon himself? There was the idea of destroying British power in India, but even if Egypt were successfully occupied how much farther was there to go? There was the idea that it would embarrass the British in some way. At first sight there is a glimpse here of a real object; England was the arch-enemy of the Revolution, Pitt was the soul of the Coalitions, and also their financier. The thoughts of the Revolutionists had always run on an invasion of England or Ireland, and Napoleon himself had lately made an inspection of the northern camps and harbours to see if there were any means that would warrant the prosecution of this favourite scheme; but he found no prospects of success and had to turn elsewhere. Anything that would injure England would have been justifiable from the military point of view.

But surely Pitt himself could not have devised a plan better suited to his own interest than the Expedition to Egypt!

In the first place, all threat of even an attempt at invasion of England was shelved for the time being, and, though the danger had not been so great as it became in 1805, this must have been a relief.

In the second place, England had no army for offensive purposes, but now the navy was offered an opportunity to strike an offensive blow. A fleet may blockade a country, but it is obvious that its scope for offensive action is limited to the coast line. The French army was safe from Nelson until it embarked on the high seas, but once there it was very vulnerable. There was a double danger—it might have been, and very nearly was, caught before it reached its destination—or, as actually happened, its communications with France might be cut.

If the French fleet had been destroyed by a storm at sea this might have been written down as sheer bad luck, the sort of accident which cannot be foreseen or avoided. But luck cannot be accepted as a factor in this case; the British fleet was a concrete danger; it was as certain as anything can be in war that Nelson would receive orders to hunt out and attack the Expedition.

But there was more than this. While a French force was deliberately exposed to danger abroad France was left in a dangerous situation at home. The Austrians had signed peace but made no pretensions of goodwill, and were burning to revenge their recent defeat; the absence of 40,000 French soldiers and the general who led them to victory was a temptation to resume the war, a temptation to which they soon succumbed. The Tsar Paul sent the great Suvorov, at the head of 60,000 Russians, to the French frontier. In fact, the absence of Napoleon and his men was the opportunity of the enemies of France, and was just what Pitt required to help him with his Second Coalition.

To sum up—England was relieved of any threat of invasion—a French army was placed in the only situation where it was open to attack from the British fleet: France was deprived of 40,000 men and her best generals: the Coalition was encouraged to resume war.

Napoleon ought to have foreseen these dangers; he was a student of the theory of strategy; though only twenty-eight years of age he had experience; he was the practical soldier who had planned the Campaign of Italy; he was the diplomat who had signed the Armistice of Cherasco and the Peace of Campo Formio; he knew all about the weakness of the French Government, the poverty of its treasury, the possibilities of a *coup d'état*.

It is true that the British fleet had lately been withdrawn from the Mediterranean, also that its efficiency had, for a moment, been impaired by a mutiny at the Nore. But if Napoleon thought this implied that he had nothing to fear from the Royal Navy it was a strange mistake.

It is also true that France had other armies; but, again the fact remains that during Napoleon's absence the Austrians recovered all they had lost in Italy.

If he failed to see the dangers it shows a lack of judgment which would have covered any less exalted person with censure and ridicule. If he did foresee them it shows a wilful disregard of the interests of France.

The simplest explanation, and at the same time the kindest, is that his recent success had blinded him to everything except his own infallibility; there might be risks, but all great generals have taken risks—what were risks to the heroes of Italy? He who said that he only saw the main body of the enemy was now so absorbed in his own dreams that he could see nothing but the glamour of the East.

It is noteworthy that the project emanated from him alone; a search of records fails to produce any trace of approval from the Government or anybody else.

The Directors recognised the danger; as was the case two years earlier, they could afford to see Napoleon himself removed from the scene, but they could not afford the men, the ships, the equipment, or the money required. But they were in an awkward position; the despatch of Napoleon to Egypt would leave France in danger, but the retention of him in Paris would be danger to the Directors themselves; recognising the latter as the more immediate danger, they gave a reluctant consent. Up to the last moment, they were striving to find some means of stopping the Expedition without bringing about open rupture; Napoleon himself believed that during the last days they were trying to have him poisoned. It would certainly have been a remedy for their own personal troubles, and would have left them with a fine army to meet the situation in Europe.

It cannot, therefore, be argued that on this occasion he was actuated by devotion to the welfare of his adopted country or by public policy; public policy was usefully invoked on other occasions, but there was not even a pretence of it here. This may be seen from extracts from his own letters.

"The people of Paris do not remember anything," he said to Bourienne. "Were I to remain here, doing nothing, I should be lost. In this great Babylon everything wears out; my glory has already disappeared. This little Europe does not supply enough of it for me. I must seek it in the East, all great fame comes from that quarter. However, I wish first to make a tour of the northern coast to see for myself what may be attempted. If the success of a descent upon England appear doubtful, as I suspect it will, the Army of England shall become the Army of the East, and I go to Egypt."

It was Napoleon himself who insisted on the Great Adventure, in opposition to his Government, in disregard of the theoretical laws of strategy and of the practical danger in pursuit of personal ambition.

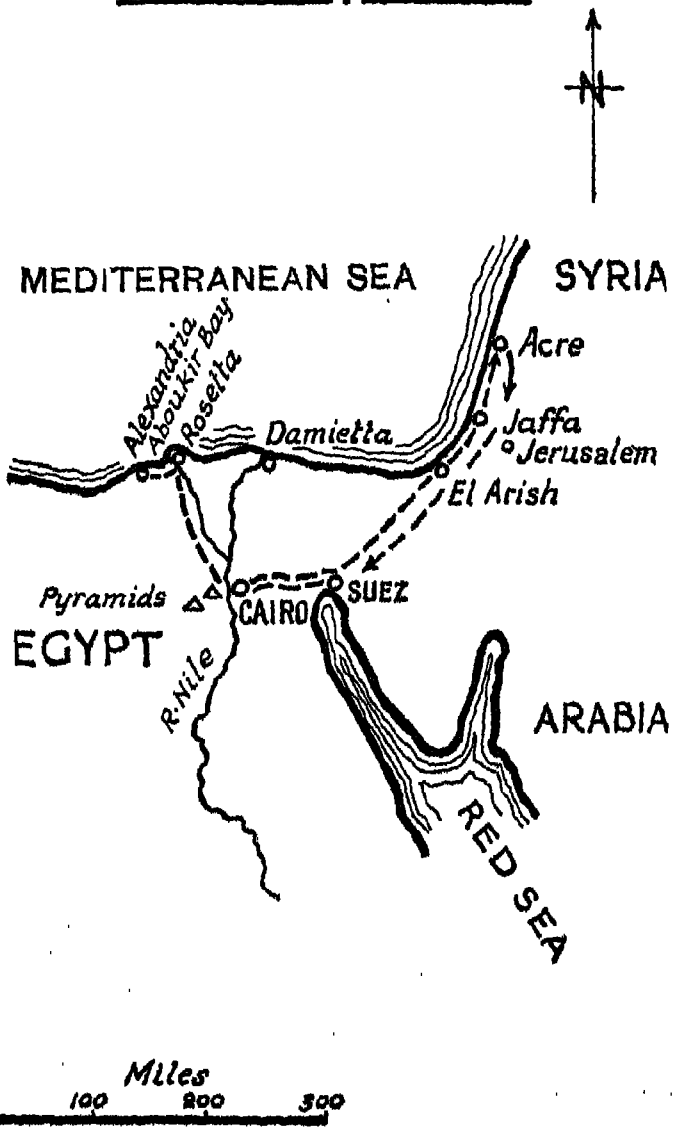
PREVIOUS PREPARATION.—Some of the Previous Preparation was good. Berthier was sent to Rome, and Brune to Switzerland, to collect money; the pretexts for these expeditions were "acts of violence"; they were both very successful. Harsh words have been used about the morality of them, but it must be remembered that in those days the spoils were to the strong and there was no arguing about reparations. Berthier himself wrote: "In sending me to Rome you appoint me treasurer to the expedition against England. I will try to fill the exchequer."

The harbours of Northern Italy, Spain, and Holland were searched for ships; a flotilla of over 300 transports was collected; to convoy them there was a fleet of 13 ships of the line and 7 frigates. The troops, which have been estimated between 35,000 and 40,000 strong, were secretly embarked at various ports. This was a real triumph of organisation, the biggest oversea expedition which had ever been despatched in modern times.

In some other respects the Preparation was faulty. We read that he collected wise men and consulted with them about the customs and conditions of the East; but did he ask about the points which are essential to European troops? He might have learnt that, though June may be a good month for a voyage across the Mediterranean, July is the worst month for beginning a campaign on Egyptian soil. He might have learnt more about the soft sand which makes marching so distressing, about the water difficulty, about the unhealthiness of the towns. But perhaps his scientists had souls above such details.

In Italy a great point of the Preparation had been his proclamation promising fertile valleys and rich cities, and these promises were amply fulfilled. He painted this new Land of Promise in even brighter colours, but the hopes of his men were dispelled by the first sight of the burning sands of Aboukir and the collection of stinking hovels which was

Egypt & Syria


N
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
SYRIA
Alexandria
Aboukir Bay
Roseitta
Damietta
Acre
Jaffa
Jerusalem
El Arish
Pyramids
CAIRO
SUEZ
EGYPT
R. Nile
ARABIA
RED SEA
Miles
0
100
200
300

known as Alexandria. This naturally produced depression and very soon stern discipline had to take the place of the failing enthusiasm.

THE START.—Napoleon set out from Toulon on May 9th, and his first move was to Malta. This island was in the hands of the Knights of St. John, who were drawn from various nations and included several Frenchmen. The fortifications were of terrific strength and would have withstood a long siege; but there was no siege; the natives hated the Knights, who, in turn, hated each other, and nobody wanted to fight; so Napoleon walked in without striking a blow. He halted there for a week and busied himself with reorganising the whole place. He abolished the Knights and imposed a new constitution; he fixed the taxes; he arranged the curriculum for the university. In fact, he gave Malta plenty of reforms, but took away everything else he could lay hands on; the treasures of the palaces and churches were no inconsiderable addition to his exchequer.

Resuming his voyage Napoleon reached Aboukir bay on July 1st, and the disembarkation was complete by the 3rd; Alexandria was taken with little trouble, and a start was made towards Cairo. From the first the troops found the sand very tiring to march on, the heat was oppressive and water was terribly scarce.

After light skirmishes they approached Cairo and there fought the one big Battle of the Pyramids. The Mamelukes' forces consisted of light cavalry, well mounted, but with few arms except their scimitars; there was no artillery; their organisation was loose, and their only good points were their mobility and their courage.

The French adopted tactics well suited to oppose such forces; they formed infantry squares, placed chequerwise, so that they could bring converging fire on the attackers without firing into each other. The Mamelukes were driven

off with considerable loss, while the French casualties were about 30 killed and 300 wounded.

It was a tactical victory, but tactical successes, though relieving the situation, could not make a success of the campaign. It was one thing to disperse the Mameluke horsemen, it was quite another to follow them up. When he wanted to strike his decisive blow Napoleon found only thin air to aim at. He remained at Cairo for about five months, sending small columns in various directions to hunt the enemy; they encountered no resistence but effected very little.

On August 1st Nelson struck the blow which might have been expected.

He had scoured the Mediterranean in search of the French, and had missed them once or twice by very narrow margins; he had actually been at Alexandria only two days before Napoleon arrived there, but, finding nothing, had sailed away again. At last, however, he located the French fleet in the roadstead of Aboukir. With fine seamanship and courage he sailed right in and attacked; only three French ships succeeding in making good their escape; their flagship *Orient* was blown up with Admiral Brueys on board, also with all the treasure which had been collected at Malta.

The Battle of the Nile was decisive; the British commanded the Mediterranean, and, though light French ships occasionally slipped through their blockade, no reinforcements or supplies could come from France. The whole population of Egypt was inspired with hopes of getting rid of the invaders, and began a sort of guerilla warfare; the Sultan decided to help them.

Napoleon and his army were practically marooned on a very inhospitable shore.

CAIRO.—The situation looked desperate. The troops were suffering from the plagues of Egypt; discipline could not prevent looting—though there was little to loot. Von

Wartenburg has collected the following extracts from letters.

"There is nothing on earth so wretched, so miserable, so unhealthy as Alexandria; the houses are mud hovels with holes instead of windows . . . in a word, imagine the ugliest and worst-built pigeon-cotes, and you will have a correct idea of Alexandria." Nor did Cairo please them better: "This town is horrible; the streets breathe plague on account of the filth, the people are disgusting and brutalised." "Since we have been in Egypt the army has not ceased to suffer. The tremendous exertions we have had to make in the desert; the great heat, which seemed to make the soil red-hot; the necessity of being constantly on the march, though entirely without provisions: all this had led to many volunteers dying, falling suddenly down from sheer exhaustion." "It is almost impossible for me to convey any idea to you of what we have suffered; sufferings upon sufferings, privations, misery, fatigues, we have gone through them all to the utmost." Not a few confirmed these words by their suicide. "Several soldiers have blown out their brains, others have cast themselves into the Nile; some dreadful things have happened." "We have had men here who committed suicide in the very presence of the commander-in-chief, saying of him, 'This is your work.'" "Some soldiers have been overheard to remark, on seeing their generals pass, 'There they are, the butchers of the French,' and a thousand other expressions of the same kind." Napoleon himself wrote to Berthier: "About 200 blind are starting this day, citizen-general, for Rosetta; it is my desire that they should be sent home to France."

But Napoleon was too full of ideas to be cast down at the upset of one of them; throughout his life we find that when one scheme failed he wasted no time on regrets but rushed at once into a new one. Here he was as full of schemes as ever, and while he is halted at Cairo it is

interesting to consider some of them, especially in regard to his attitude towards the Egyptians.

From the very beginning he had tried to ingratiate himself with them; he had come to liberate them from the yoke of the Sultan, and to introduce all that was good in the way of western civilisation. He founded a library, a chemical laboratory, an institute of science, and a university. He started various factories, chiefly for his own requirements, such as gunpowder. He encouraged agriculture, chiefly with a view to supplying his own army.

He gave the Mullahs to understand that he was a convert to the religion of their Prophet, though some of the stories about this are probably exaggerated. But we get here a good view of his attitude towards religion; at one moment he was calling on the Egyptians to fight for their creed, while a few months later he was calling on the Christian subjects of the Sultan to rise for the Cross against the Crescent. An opportunist in everything he found religion a useful means of appeal, and he used it as such with no discrimination. Whether he had any deep-lying beliefs is a matter of argument and opinion; he certainly was not a strict follower of any known creed or sect. But, having no convictions in this way himself, he made a serious mistake in underestimating the power of religion and dogma in others. In the East, especially, the various nations cling to their beliefs, their traditions, and their superstitions; they understand no half-measures in their faiths. Napoleon's alternate appeals to such widely separated bodies as Moslems and Christians became known to both and disgusted them.

It was somewhere about this time that he was informed about the conduct of Josephine. Some authors say that he had been given hints during the voyage; Bourienne, his private secretary, declares that it was in Egypt that Napoleon was first informed by Junot, and there is an account of the interview in his book. Napoleon seems to

have had no hesitation in accepting as true the story of her unfaithfulness ; he was furiously angry for the moment, but here again he wasted no time in regrets. He turned his attention to a certain Madame Fourès, and this new infatuation soon became an open scandal.

SYRIA.—In all his energy and organisation at Cairo Napoleon's first thoughts were for the upkeep of his army. He dealt severely with the officers who asked permission to resign, and kept the men too busy to give them much time for grumbling. He collected money and supplies by levies and confiscations, and was quite ruthless in this ; Bourienne admits that it was customary to resort to shooting men in order to get their money.

But though his organisation did something to relieve the local situation, nothing could restore sea communications with France ; he could not sit indefinitely at Cairo watching his army dwindle from disease and deteriorate from hopelessness. He must therefore look for some other means of escape from the situation, and finally turned his thoughts on Syria.

Napoleon proposed to march, by Suez and Acre, along the coast of Palestine and Asia Minor, to Constantinople. On the way he expected to find recruits from the various disaffected subjects of the Sultan. After entering Constantinople in triumph he would continue his victorious march to Vienna and thence return to France. The total distance was something over 3,000 miles. He actually went about 300.

It is impossible to say how far Napoleon believed in any hopes of success ; perhaps it was only an attempt to raise the spirits of his men and get them away from the depressing influence of Cairo. The project looks hopeless as we see it now, but there is this much to be said, it was forced upon him as the only possible exit from the situation. We cannot, therefore, judge it so harshly as the original scheme for the

Expedition to the East, which was unnecessary and unprovoked.

At the beginning of February, 1799, he started his march with about 15,000 men, leaving the remainder at Cairo and Alexandria under Desaix. On March 7th Jaffa was taken and, as usual, looted. Two thousand Turks were taken prisoners and were afterwards shot—further reference will be made to this later.

Continuing his advance Napoleon came in front of Acre on May 17th. This town was partly fortified, and the Turkish garrison was materially assisted by an English squadron under Sir Sidney Smith. This young commodore had lately been given the command in the Eastern Mediterranean, much to the annoyance of Nelson, who was now at Naples. The ships held the harbour while some officers and gunners were sent into the town. Before the French could attempt an assault a breach had to be made, either by siege guns or mines; this of course took time, and it was not until two months later, on May 10th, that the real assault could be attempted.

It was repulsed with heavy loss.

This was the first serious reverse that Napoleon himself had encountered; but there was no hope that further attempts would be more successful, so with 10,000 sound men, and 3,000 sick, he turned back towards Cairo; on his way he was obliged to halt for two days at Jaffa.

JAFFA.—Two serious charges have been brought against Napoleon at this period, both connected with Jaffa.

The first is that 2,000 Turkish prisoners, who had laid down their arms on being promised their lives by French officers, were afterwards shot. There is no doubt about the facts of the case. They had surrendered as prisoners of war: there is no denial of the fact that they had been promised their lives; they were shot by Napoleon's order. Two excuses have been put forward. First—they had already

been captured once before at El Arish and had given their parole not to take up arms again ; by breaking their parole they had made themselves outlaws, and therefore the order was justifiable ; it seems probable, though not proven, that this was true as regards some of them ; it could scarcely be true of all, for not even one thousand prisoners had ever been taken at El Arish. The second excuse is that Napoleon could spare no men to guard the prisoners or escort them to Cairo, and he could only feed them by starving his own men, so he must either shoot them or turn them loose again ; the French troops, already grumbling at the shortness of their rations, were clamouring for the execution ; Napoleon therefore gave the order, with reluctance, as a measure of public necessity.

Von Wartenburg writes on this as follows.

" In the eyes of mere didactic historical writers this deed may appear horrible and revolting, but practical military history must not consider it as such. The safety of one's own army, on which the possibility depends of ultimately gaining the victory, must outweigh all other considerations. If such an act is necessary for the safety of one's army, it is not only justified, but its repetition in any future war would be advisable, and no convention could alter the fact. In the exceptional circumstances of warfare, no other motto is permissible but this, ' *Salus publica summa lex !* ' and any conclusion of conventions can, and is meant to be, binding only as far as the above principle allows. Cases will indeed occur in every war where the combatants are forced to violate the literal text of conventional laws for their own safety, and in such cases recriminations may indeed be defensible for political purposes, but are, for all that, untenable. Napoleon himself considered his action at Jaffa as quite natural, and spoke of it as such to his subordinate officers ; it did not enter his head to discuss the necessity for his decision. He wrote to Marmont : ' The capture of Jaffa has been a

brilliant affair; 4,000 of the best troops of Djezzar and the best gunners of Constantinople had to be put to the sword'; and to Kleber: 'The garrison of Jaffa consisted of nearly 4,000 men; 2,000 were killed in the town, and nearly 2,000 were shot between yesterday and to-day.' We mentioned some time ago that Napoleon could not really be said to be cruel, but he did possess the strength of mind to be hard and to look on men at certain times as mere counters; and this strength of mind a general must possess."

On this passage I make no comment.

The second charge is that, finding he could not transport all his sick, he gave orders to have some of them poisoned. The facts in this case however are not proved at all. It is not difficult to guess how such a story got about—the men were suffering agonies from what was called plague but seems to have been a form of cholera; the doctors were administering opium to give them relief; some men, who were, in any case, on the point of death, no doubt died while under the effect of opium; others who survived raised the cry of "Poison"—in their state this is not surprising. But there is not a shred of evidence to show that wholesale poisoning was ordered; we know that Napoleon showed himself fearless of infection in visiting the sick and took infinite pains to get away all that could be moved; some were smuggled off on a ship; 800 were carried on pack animals. Some, indeed, who were too ill to be moved had to be abandoned at Jaffa; when Sir Sidney Smith entered the town he found seven of them still alive, but in his report on the subject he makes no mention of poison.

It is safe to conclude that though there was no doubt a panic on the subject there is no evidence whatever of fell design on Napoleon's part.

The march back to Cairo was a marvellous performance in the circumstances—300 miles in 25 days with two days' halt

on the road. And this across the sand in the month of June! It needed a Napoleon to carry it through.

ABOUKIR.—The Turks were mightily encouraged by their success at Acre, and, supported by the British, they decided to follow it up. The Sultan despatched a force of 15,000 (Napoleon says 18,000), which was convoyed by Sir Sidney Smith and disembarked at Aboukir on June 15th. Leaving a small garrison at Cairo Napoleon turned his whole attention to this new danger, and, having collected every available man, he made his attack on July 23rd, winning a complete victory. The Turks were slaughtered or captured or driven into the sea; scarcely a man escaped. Sir Sidney Smith, who watched the battle from his flagship, was powerless to give any help.

This was a distinct victory and Napoleon thought it a good moment for carrying out a plan which had been in his mind for some time—to sail for France. Sir Sidney Smith had sent him some English and German newspapers, which told him about the state of France and confirmed him in his decision. On August 23rd he embarked on the frigate *Muiron*, taking with him a couple of hundred men and some of his best officers, Berthier, Murat, Lannes, Marmont, and others. His intention was kept secret; even Kleber, who was to succeed him, only heard of his appointment by letter, after Napoleon had gone.

The story of the French occupation is soon completed. Kleber was in command till he was assassinated on June 14th, 1800; Menou succeeded him. In March, 1801, Sir Richard Abercrombie landed with a British force at Aboukir; Menou attacked him but was defeated; Abercrombie was mortally wounded in the battle. Confusion sometimes arises about the three battles at Aboukir. The first was the naval battle on August 1st, 1798, in which Nelson destroyed the fleet of Admiral Brueys; we call it the

Battle of the Nile. The second was on July 23rd, 1799, when Napoleon annihilated a Turkish force. The third was on March 21st, 1801, when Menou was repulsed by the British.

General Hely Hutchinson took up the command and advanced to Cairo, where he concluded an arrangement by which the French were to evacuate Egypt. Some 20,000 remaining Frenchmen were sent home in September, 1801.

Harsh words have been used about Napoleon's conduct in leaving his army and it has been the subject of much argument and various opinions. The French who were left behind had no doubts on the subject—they called it base desertion. The argument on the other side is that France had need of him; this was true. The Treaty of Campo Formio had been torn up, and the Second Coalition had gathered in Austria, Russia, Naples, and Brunswick: the Directory was sliding downhill faster than ever; no new constitution, no new laws could restore the situation: the French wanted a man. They thought that Napoleon was their only hope, and events afterwards showed that they were right. This seems to justify his flight; it was not a heroic move, but " very judgmatical."

The question remains, whether the factor which decided him was a determination to serve France or the desire to escape from a hopeless position and seek new fields of adventure.

Most people will find his own words the saddest reading on the subject. Madame de Rémusat quotes him as saying afterwards, " The time spent in Egypt was the happiest of my life for it was the most ideal." If these words were not corroborated it would seem incredible that they could ever have been spoken, but, alas! there is corroboration. To Napoleon the campaign consisted of two very satisfactory victories, the Battles of the Pyramids and Aboukir; Jaffa

and Acre had never been; the plague, the heat, the thirst, the ruthless measures had never been.

Ruthless measures may be imposed by the necessities of war, which is always cruel; mistakes of judgment may be forgiven; but what excuse is there for callousness?

"It was the happiest time of my life"—this is the worst thing that has ever been said of the Expedition to Egypt.

PART II

THE MAN OF DESTINY

CHAPTER VI

Brumaire

THE STATESMAN.—If the Expedition to Egypt had been Napoleon's first campaign it might have seemed natural enough—a young upstart will jump at an opportunity, without waiting to think out the difficulties and risks which it involves. Again, if it had come at the end of his career, the last throw of a ruined gambler, it would have fitted into the picture. But the most astounding thing about that astounding fiasco is that it is sandwiched in between the two most brilliant periods in his career.

In '96 and '97 he had been a statesman and a soldier; he had shown restraint in not grasping at supreme power until the pear was ripe; he had steadily improved his own position without an open rupture with the Directors; he had combined diplomacy with strategy in dealing with the Sardinians and the Austrians.

Then came the first extraordinary change; he had thrown diplomacy to the winds when he left France in danger, and strategy to the winds when he took obvious risks in pursuit of the mirages of the East.

More astounding still is the second change to which we now come, a change more sudden and more complete. It is as if the man had awakened from a nightmare, and, forgetting all about it, had reverted to his former clear-minded self, or, indeed, to something better; still bold and enthusiastic, but never allowing his enthusiasms to outrun his reason.

He set one clear object before him—to heal the wounds of France.

Step by step, in logical sequence, he moved towards his aim. The first step was to establish a strong government, and, as the previous rulers had been tyrants in their strength and cowards in their weakness, he determined to make himself Dictator—let those call it ambition who will. To secure this position it was necessary to overthrow the Directory, and *to do it without bloodshed.* Next it would be necessary to teach a lesson to the insolent foreigners who had been menacing France; and, of course, this would at the same time strengthen his own position. Having thus secured peace at home and abroad, he could settle down to administration and organisation, to restore the finances, commerce, and prosperity of his country.

The first step was taken at what is known as Brumaire, just one month after his arrival from Egypt, when he deposed the Directory.

The second step was the campaign of Marengo, which will be sketched in the next chapter; it defeated the Austrians, broke up the Second Coalition, and won back all that France had lost during his absence.

The third step was an honourable peace, and then he could turn his mind to the internal situation. In three years he raised monuments to his fame, some of them literally hewn in stone, more lasting than all the trophies of war which were ever paraded beneath the Arc de Triomphe.

I like to think of Napoleon during these three years. Restless, of course—we cannot expect to find him otherwise; and impatient—while slow wits failed to keep pace with his impetuous thoughts. There were mistakes at times, but how insignificant they appear beside the things that were accomplished; and even these mistakes were different in character to those of Egypt; then they had been the appeals of an opportunist, now to Moslems, now to Christians, like a politician who barters his principles for votes; but here we have only the honest mistakes of a young man in a hurry.

Sad to say, there were some black spots, and they must be looked at when we come to them.

On the whole, however, he was lenient. Robespierre, when he scented a rival, despatched him to the guillotine. Napoleon quietly pushed out some of the irreconcilables, but converted many others, and tried to ingratiate himself with all; it was not the weakness of a politician; it was the generosity of a powerful statesman who wanted to be at peace with his own people.

He was doing the work of a dozen, one might say of a hundred men. Consulting with engineers and architects about roads, bridges, fortifications, canals, and other public works; then—all on the same day—with bankers and merchants, experts in education and jurisprudence, heads of the Church and chiefs of police. He made use of all the best brains in the country—Talleyrand, the astute Minister for Foreign Affairs; Berthier, organising the War Office; Fouché, the arch-spy, watching the Sections of Paris; Gaudin, the financier; but he pulled the strings himself; they were his assistants, and could never be rivals.

His was a constructive policy, not a thing of paper and unattainable ideals; big as his projects were, they were always within the realm of practical politics; nearly every one of his conceptions came to life. There are few statesmen of whom this can be said.

It has been necessary to look forward over these three years before going into the stories of Brumaire and Marengo, because Napoleon himself was looking forward. His Maxims teach us that in war the General had always one object in his mind, and that the preparations and manœuvres were only steps leading up to it. In the same way the Statesman had one object in peace; it would be too much to say that he foresaw all the incidents on the way towards it, but it must be remembered that the General never laid down any rigid plans for the phase of manœuvre; he knew that his ultimate goal was the main body of the

enemy, and he felt his way towards it, acting on certain principles, but adapting them to the situation as he went along. If some of the preliminary moves of the Statesman seem unscrupulous and despotic, it must be remembered that they were means to an end, and it is unfair to judge them till the end has been reached; it must be admitted that Napoleon would use any means and employ any tools to gain an end on which he had set his mind.

Let us keep in mind the ultimate object, as Napoleon himself did, and it will make this period of his career more intelligible than any other; we seem to get more into touch with his thoughts, and he becomes more human. The Emperor, with his years of triumphant warfare, may appear to be swayed by ambition and nothing else; but the years of the Consul's work do not give that impression; an ambitious man might have started off at once on the path of conquest, but, instead of that, he made himself a drudge; just as he had taken on the responsibility of his mother and family, and starved himself for their sakes, so he now adopted the peasant, the workman, the soldier, as his children, and, turning away from immediate glory, set himself to build a future for France; it was a labour of love, but still a labour.

Was this the real man? I like to believe that it was. The tinsel of the stage is ever there, but the central figure seems strangely aloof from it all; not a mummer playing a part, but a great man and a real one.

STATE OF FRANCE.—France was in a deplorable condition. Throughout the summer of '99 the Coalition had been threatening invasion, and, indeed, it is impossible to say what might have happened had there been any real co-operation between Austria, Russia, and England; this will be discussed in the next chapter; but though the danger of actual invasion passed over for the moment, all the confidence inspired by the Campaign of Rivoli had faded into anxiety and nervousness.

The internal situation is difficult to define; disillusionment, followed by sullen apathy, seems to describe the mood of the masses. The hopes of liberty which had been awakened by the first revolt against tyranny had been dulled by the bitter experience of ten years. The relief after the fall of the Terrorists had led to an orgy of frivolous gaiety, but it did not lead to prosperity or comfort; and in a way it had contributed to the unsettled state of affairs by encouraging royalists and *émigrés* to make fresh plots; the first successes of the allies had encouraged them further to renew the risings in the West and South.

Trade was bad, because England held command of the seas, and the markets of Austria and Italy were closed by the war. The Treasury was empty; the taxes were unequally apportioned and badly collected; the Directory had taken the desperate step of disavowing two-thirds of the public debt; this only ruined a large number of middle-class citizens, and brought no relief to the rest. The two Councils were not violent or tyrannical, but the Executive was hopelessly incapable. The men in power were thinking only of making their own fortunes before the crash should come. Barras was intriguing with a view to getting the best possible price for his services; he had been approached by the royalists with the idea of bringing Louis XVIII to the throne. It is even possible that this might have been carried through if Napoleon had failed to escape from Egypt.

In fact, politics had given way to personal intrigues, and, while the masses of the people were apathetic, the leaders were swayed by nothing but selfishness. During the four years of the Directory there was not one single man who earned distinction in an enviable sense. In May '99 the Abbé Sieyès was elected a Director, and he stood out from the others, because he had a reputation for wisdom and was not involved in the prevailing corruption. But, as Holland Rose justly remarks, perhaps no man has built up a reputation for political capacity on performances so slight as the

Abbé Sieyès. He was a quack, whose panacea for political trouble was a new Constitution, to be devised by himself; it was a complicated machinery, devised to prevent the usurpation of power by individuals; all the officials, who included Consuls, Senate, Councils, and other busybodies, were to have checks on each other, until nobody could do anything but prevent others from doing anything. But it was not the Constitution that was at fault so much as the men in high places; a new Constitution would only mean a new scramble for power. No paper scheme could stir the blood of France; there was good red blood in her veins, but it could only be roused by an invigorating personality, not by theories, clever though these might be.

Is it any wonder that the nation hailed Napoleon's arrival with delirious enthusiasm? He was personality personified. Everybody had heard of the fame of Italy and Egypt (and they accepted the latter at his own valuation), but that was by no means all; it was the personal magnetism of the little corporal that charmed their hearts and warmed their blood.

BRUMAIRE.—Napoleon travelled from the coast to Paris along roads lined by enthusiastic crowds; in their faces he could see joy, and he could also see traces of the bad days through which they had passed. The nation was on his side. But he was too shrewd to suppose that the politicians of Paris would surrender without a fight, or at all events without some bargaining; and he went to work as he would have gone to war—"It is only by a close study of all the details that a general can make those plans which alone lead to success." He must make quite sure of his own forces before he led them to attack.

Here he got much unintentional help from Sieyès. That worthy, having decided to save France by a paper scheme, had need of a military man to help him, and welcomed the victorious general as a useful assistant. Napoleon hung back from the alliance for a few days, until he saw that

Barras and Fouché and Talleyrand would join him; then he made his decision. It would at all events be helpful to know that these men would not oppose him, and they might be of use. As they were all intriguers, each of them was allowed a string to pull. Sieyès sat down to plan a new Constitution, and this disarmed the ultra-democrats, who would have taken fright at any idea of a Dictatorship. Fouché would manage the police. Talleyrand and Barras would canvass the *salons* of Paris.

It would be interesting to know what these fellow-conspirators really thought would be the outcome. Sieyès seems to have flattered himself that he was the leader, but Talleyrand and Fouché probably saw more. Barras knew, from inside knowledge, that the Directory was doomed, so he had to get out of it and into something else. None of them liked Napoleon, but they wanted to be on the winning side.

The President of the Five Hundred happened to be Lucien Bonaparte, and he was, of course, a staunch and, as it proved, a valuable ally.

The troops were entirely on Napoleon's side, and they did not ask what the outcome would be.

Having made sure of his forces, the next step was to plan his manœuvres. The two Councils sat in the Tuileries; at such a place, in the middle of Paris, it would be dangerous to attempt a *coup-de-main*; the Sections would be on the spot, and no one could tell what an excitable mob would do; the Jacobin agitators would scream that liberty was being trodden down; the royalists would welcome any fighting that would discredit the other parties; some people might fight, like Irishmen at a fair, because there was nothing better to do. Napoleon intended that his assumption of power, which was quite unjustifiable in theory, should in practice have the support of the masses; it would be the worst possible beginning if he had to open fire on the mob.

The Councils must therefore be removed from Paris, so that he could attack his opponents in detail. Here Fouché the liar prepared the way. The report was spread that the old Terrorists were planning an attack on the Tuileries; the Councils were in danger; it would be better if they moved to some quiet spot—St. Cloud, for instance, only four miles from the centre of Paris; and a battalion of Regulars would be sent there to guard them.

This was rather like asking a goose to avoid the butcher's knife by placing itself under the kindly protection of the fox. The Councils, however, had little idea that they were in danger from Napoleon; they knew that something was going to happen—all Paris had been buzzing with expectation of something—but the general idea was that the Directors would be deposed, and the change would affect persons rather than the Constitution. The Ancients had been for some time hostile to the Directory; the Five Hundred were more democratic, and would oppose anything like a Dictatorship—especially as it meant that they would lose their own positions. But Lucien's speeches, full of ardent democracy, sounded like pledges on his brother's behalf. So the Ancients passed a decree to remove both Councils to St. Cloud on Nov. 9th; this was followed by another appointing General Bonaparte to command all the troops in or near Paris.

All seemed well, and the plotters were full of confidence, but the *coup* did not take place so smoothly as they expected, and, in fact, it very nearly failed.

Napoleon set off for St. Cloud on the 10th surrounded by a glittering cavalcade, which included all the prominent officers of the army.

Some delay had occurred in the start, and before the arrival at St. Cloud the Councils heard rumours which aroused their alarm; after a stormy debate the Five Hundred passed a resolution to maintain the institutions of France unchanged. When Napoleon presented himself at the Bar

of the Ancients he could only stammer out vague excuses for the display of military force, and quickly changed the subject to a denouncement of the Government. He went on to the Five Hundred to make a similar statement, but found them already in a state of uproar; cries of "Down with the tyrant!" "Put an end to the outlaw!" were flung at him. Startled by this unexpected violence, Napoleon appeared baffled. Accounts say that he turned pale and even fainted; it was one of the few occasions in his life when he failed to control either himself or those around him. He was carried out by a few soldiers. Lucien hurriedly declared the sitting of the Council closed, flung off his robes of office, and disappeared. It looked as if the plot had broken down.

But as soon as Napoleon found himself outside, facing his Grenadiers, he recovered his presence of mind. The troops were wavering; it had not dawned on them till this moment that the whole Legislature was to be attacked; respect for the Councils had been ingrained by military discipline; and the accusation "Hors la loi" was a terrible one. Accounts of the proceedings vary, but it seems to have been Lucien who turned the scale; in a passionate speech he told the men that it was the deputies who were the outlaws; a small minority, armed with daggers and bribed with English gold, had terrorised the majority of the Councils; would the soldiers of France permit such things? Then, drawing a sword, he swore that he would plunge it into Napoleon's heart if ever he made an attempt against liberty. The soldiers of France caught the reference to English gold. Drums beat, troops cheered, "Vive Bonaparte" drowned "Vive la Republique," and bayonets were marched in to overawe the majesty of the law. The legislators of France made their escape through the windows, and left the field to the victor.

A suggestion has been made that Napoleon's moment of hesitation and weakness was all a pretence; he did not want

to answer awkward questions; still less did he want to commit himself by giving any guarantees or by making any public declarations of his intentions. If once he entered into the cold arena of argument and reason, he himself knew that he was outside the law; if they asked him to take an oath of fidelity to the Constitution he could neither accept nor refuse. Better, therefore, to keep the blood warm by a little melodrama; this would lead to a decision by force instead of by reason, and would suit him much better; it would dispose of the legislators, and settle the whole business once and for all.

It is quite true that in the end events could not have turned out better; he was left with a perfectly free hand, and had pinned himself down to nothing, not even to his fellow-conspirators. The suggestion of mock hesitation is therefore ingenious, and fits in precisely with Napoleon's plans and character; but it is only an inference. The weight of evidence shows that the hesitation was real; several eye-witnesses have left accounts of the scene, and, though they do not all agree, it never seems to have struck any of them that there was any pretence about it. He had an attack of stage fright, and for a moment lost his head. He very nearly lost it altogether, for there was no doubt it was war between him and the Five Hundred, and had the latter won they could not have afforded to spare so powerful an enemy.

The General went through many critical days on the field of battle, but Brumaire (Nov. 10th, 1799) was the most critical day of the Statesman's career.

If, however, he was nearer failure than ever before, no victory was ever more complete in the end. The supreme power was in his own hands, and he was Military Dictator of France. He took care to cover up the naked fact with cloaks of decency; even his fellow-plotters might be shocked at such a horrid sight as an undisguised Dictator. Having overthrown Justice, he picked up its mantle and put it on

his own shoulders. On this very same day Lucien collected about a score of the Five Hundred fugitives and held a strictly legal sitting; a solemn decree was passed annulling the old Constitution and legalising a provisional Government. Brumaire was *de jure* as well as *de facto*.

There were no arrests, no loud proclamations, no official celebrations to mark the funeral of the Councils. Sober citizens might almost understand that the Legislature had really made away with itself, and, of course, would be replaced as soon as possible. In fact, the Military Dictator was so unmilitary and so undictatorial that he might have been mistaken for a statue of Liberty.

We who know that the Dictatorship was already an accomplished fact need not follow in detail all the moves which gradually dropped the disguise, and unveiled Napoleon as an autocrat. First there was to be a Consulate, Sieyès, Du Cos, and Bonaparte—quite respectable names; attached to it was a complex machinery, after Sieyès' own heart, of Councils and officials; Napoleon altered it slightly and accepted it; nobody understood it, but it was taken from the hand of Sieyès as something that must be in order. This Constitution was referred to a plebiscite of the nation early in 1800, and was accepted by the overwhelming majority of 3,011,007 to 1,562. It was a vote of confidence, not in the Constitution, but in the man Napoleon, and whatever may be said of his methods in obtaining power, the fact remains that the power was based on the support of the united nation.

Napoleon simply ignored the machinery without insulting it; he had real business to attend to, and went about it in his own way. Sieyès' eyes were opened now, and he resigned; he was rewarded for his valuable services with the gift of a very fine estate at Crosnes, whither he retired, to live till 1836 in wealthy obscurity.

Du Cos followed Sieyès into retirement, and their successors were Cambacérès and Lebrun, who had no power,

but were useful assistants, Cambacérès in the domain of law and Lebrun in that of finance. Cambacérès showed how well he understood his place by refusing to take up the official quarters in the Tuileries, lest, as he remarked to Lebrun, he might have to move out again soon.

Thus the first step was complete and the internal situation had been secured ; it was now time to turn to foreign affairs.

they were intended to provoke refusals, and thus to provide an excuse for continuing the war.

It seems that Napoleon was at this time sincerely desirous of peace, but he could not afford to make it until he had struck a blow which would show the Coalition that France was still mighty. He wanted to economise and he wanted to reduce the army, and therefore he decided to continue the war until he was strong enough to make peace. His proposal to the Hapsburgs amounted to a rather blunt request that Austria should vacate Italy and leave it to the French; but as the Austrian forces had been so successful he could scarcely have expected them to accept such humiliating terms. Hence the campaign of Marengo, though apparently an offensive movement, was really defensive. We shall see that he was entirely successful; the victories at Marengo and Hohenlinden recovered all that had been lost, placed him in a stronger position than ever, broke up the Second Coalition, and frightened the Allies from any further attempts against France. It was not until five years later that the Third Coalition was formed, and then the position was entirely reversed; it was Napoleon himself who started on a career of conquest, and the Allies combined to defend themselves.

STRATEGY.—From the point of view of the Statesman Marengo was a defensive campaign, but the General knew that the best method of defence was to attack, and he therefore laid his plans for a forward movement. This is a very clear and simple example of the proper process by which a Statesman, having decided on his policy, hands it over to a General for execution; this case, of course, was made all the more simple by the fact that the Statesman and General were one and the same person, and were therefore not likely to disagree. Von Bismarck and Von Moltke were equally good in keeping themselves to their own spheres and yet combining perfectly, and this was the greatest factor in their success; many campaigns have been spoilt by the

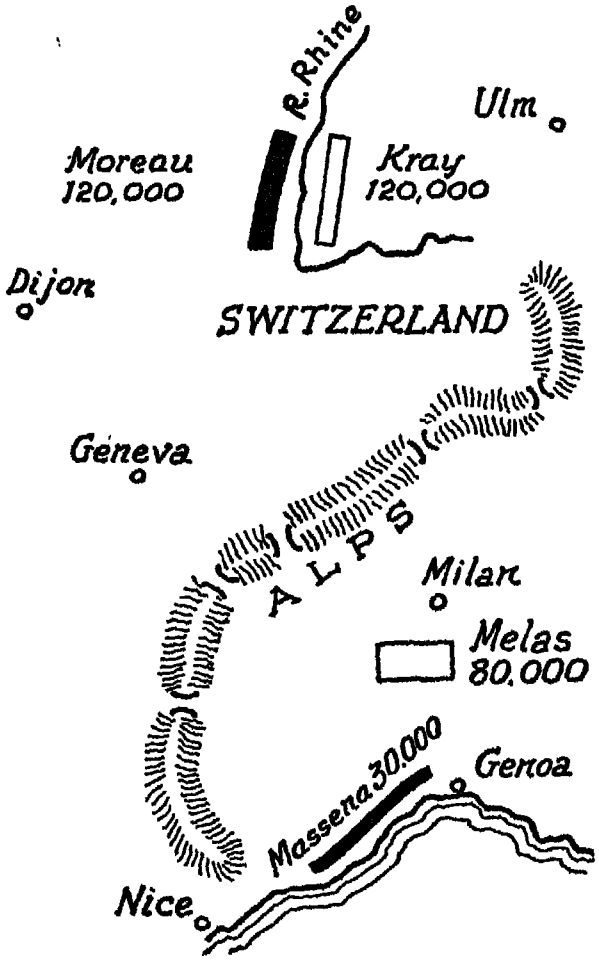
Statesman persisting too far or the General wanting to begin too soon; many campaigns have been ruined by quarrels between the two.

Leaving policy behind, we can now devote our attention to the strategical plan, and must therefore begin with a study of the map. The attached diagram illustrates the big situation.

On the Northern Wing the "Army of the Rhine" was facing the Austrians under Kray. On the Southern Wing the "Army of Italy," on the Riviera, was facing the Austrians under Melas. Between the wings Switzerland formed a salient, and was held by weak French detachments. Napoleon fixed on Dijon as the central point for his Reserve Army. His simplest plan would have been to reinforce one or other of the wings and make an attack. This, however, if successful, would only drive the Austrians back towards their homes, and could scarcely lead to a decisive victory. Nothing but a decisive blow could satisfy Napoleon, and he therefore decided on a bolder plan. The Reserve Army was ordered to advance right into Switzerland; from this forward position it could turn either North or South and strike one of the Austrian armies on the flank, or even in its rear; the success of such a blow would be decisive. This was thoroughly in accord with his Maxim "To advance on Interior Lines," and it placed his offensive mass right between the two wings of his enemy. The first step, therefore, was to advance into Switzerland and make it his place of jumping off, but he did not decide at once whether he would then move northwards or southwards.

As a matter of fact, he was at first inclined to plan a move to the North, but several reasons contributed to reject this. There was a strong personal reason. Moreau was a first-class general and had a very high reputation; he was therefore a possible rival—the only possible rival; he was a stout Republican, and was therefore opposed to

APRIL · 1800 ·


R. Rhine
Ulm
Moreau
120,000
Kray
120,000
Dijon
SWITZERLAND
Geneva
ALPS
Milan
Melas
80,000
Genoa
Massena 30,000
Nice

the Dictatorship; he was a man with considerable strength of mind, not to say obstinacy; as a patriot he would do his very best for France, but as a second-in-command he might spoil an operation by his independence. A second reason for the movement to the South was that Melas was pressing Massena severely, whereas Moreau was in no danger.

The broad scheme, therefore, in Napoleon's mind at the beginning of April 1800 was to advance into Switzerland and then turn southwards against Melas. Many critics say that this was the finest piece of strategy that Napoleon ever conceived, because it placed him in a position from which he could strike at his opponents' lines of communication without risking his own. It may seem to us now that it was rather the obvious thing to do—like the "Key to Toulon"—but it was not all obvious to his enemies (or, indeed, to his own officers), though there were experienced and clever men among them. They could not believe that any attempt would be made to force an army over the Alps; and even if an attempt were made, they thought they would get information in time to make their dispositions to meet it. Napoleon made up his mind that it must be done, and with such secrecy as would surprise his opponents. The strategy was therefore bold and original, but the critics agree that the execution of it was faulty, and in his final victory he owed much to the Goddess of Fortune.

PREVIOUS PREPARATION.—As usual, Napoleon went into all the details of organisation. He collected in the Dijon district a Reserve Army of 40,000, but, as nearly all the seasoned soldiers were already at the front, it consisted largely of very raw conscripts. Energetic measures were taken to drill them into shape and to leaven them with such veterans as were available.

The chief object was to conceal his design, and he took several steps to ensure this. One of the clauses of Sieyès' beautiful Constitution laid down that the First Consul was

on no account to command an army; Napoleon observed this strictly just as long as it suited him to do so; it may well be surmised that he would be on the spot to take command as soon as the decisive battle was imminent. But at first it suited him very well. Berthier was sent to command the Reserve Army, and Napoleon himself remained in Paris, very much in evidence. A sort of dummy army, consisting of recruits and the sweepings of hospitals and garrisons, was collected at Dijon, and paraded with great advertisement. Napoleon rushed down from Paris to inspect it and made a speech, recalling the old victories of '96, and hinting that he would lead his braves over the same line again. He knew that spies were present, and he was really addressing them; he rightly judged that they would report that he intended to go on to Nice and start from there.

Secrecy was further secured by moving his real troops on by-roads, avoiding Dijon itself and all other big towns until they got into Switzerland. In fact, the Reserve Army really concentrated about Geneva.

CONCENTRATION.—In order to make the Reserve Army as strong as possible, so as to form a striking force, every available man was to be collected, not only from France, but also from the wings. Massena was too hard pressed to spare troops, and, in any case, they could not have reached the Reserve Army in time to be of any use. Moreau was much nearer; he was ordered to attack Kray vigorously and push him back towards Ulm; then he was to send 25,000 men to join the Reserves. He carried out his orders very badly, and if the campaign had ended in disaster the blame would have rightly been laid on him; he was slow in attacking, and was afraid to jeopardise his own force by sending men away; in the end he only sent 15,000, and they were late. As the Army of the Rhine had been relegated to a secondary part, everything ought to have given way to the requirements of the major operation. The concentration was not a success.

PHASE OF MANŒUVRE.—By the end of April the Reserve Army was about Geneva. Napoleon made no rigid plans further than the preliminary move into Switzerland; indeed, we shall see that he changed them two or three times, in accordance with the information he received. There were five passes leading over the mountains down into the plain of Italy; from West to East these were Mt. Cenis; Little St. Bernard; Great St. Bernard; Simplon; St. Gothard.

His first idea was to move as far East as possible and to cross by the St. Gothard, so as to get farther behind his enemy. But bad news reached him from Massena and forced him to take the shortest route, which was by the Great St. Bernard.

The Austrian Commander Melas, though seventy years old, a veteran of the Seven Years' War, was no mean opponent. It was clear to him that the French might be expected to make a big move. He therefore decided to anticipate this by attacking Massena, so as to defeat him before he could be reinforced; and in this he was very successful. Massena was driven into Genoa and besieged; the French force here was 28,000, more than half of them sick or wounded; from April 19th to June 4th—forty-six days—they made a most heroic defence, and were only forced to surrender by sheer starvation. That brilliant romancer, Baron Marbot, has left a vivid description of the horrors of the siege. But though they could not hold Genoa, the French marched out with all the honours of war.

The rest of Massena's force was driven back to Nice.

Of course, the news of all this only reached Napoleon by degrees, but by the end of April he knew enough to show him the necessity for haste if Massena was to be saved.

On May 15th Lannes, with the advanced guard, began the crossing of the Great St. Bernard pass. Legend (and Napoleon) have magnified this into a marvellous achievement. It was no doubt good, but the difficulties were not so great

as those encountered in other marches in Napoleon's own campaigns.

At the foot of the pass on the Italian side, the road ran close underneath the little fort of Bard, which was perched upon a commanding rock overlooking a very narrow defile. For fourteen days it held out, and the stout defence put up by the garrison made a very nasty obstacle. A goat-path over the mountains enabled the French Infantry, with infinite trouble, to make a detour, and regain the main road farther down; but guns and wagons had to keep to the road. Marmont, who was commanding the Artillery, laid the roadway with litter, bound up the wheels with straw to muffle their noise, and succeeded in sneaking about forty guns through by night. But the unexpected check caused a delay of some days, and it was not till the 23rd that the main body was collected at Ivrea; this completes the first stage.

Napoleon, who had left Paris on May 6th, crossed the pass on the 20th, at the tail of the column, and joined the main body at Ivrea on the 26th. His obvious course was to continue due South and relieve Massena, but this would probably bring him face to face with Melas somewhere about Turin. He was elated by the success of his first move, for he now had open ground on which to manœuvre, so he decided on a much more ambitious scheme—he turned eastwards to Milan, so as to get right between Melas and Mantua.

It has been suggested that in leaving Massena to his fate Napoleon was brutal, but this is not so; it was most probable that as soon as Melas heard of the French at Milan he would raise the siege and hasten eastwards, to secure his line of retreat—and this is exactly what Melas did; he sent an order to Ott to raise the siege and march to Alessandria; but Ott knew that Genoa was at the last extremity, and, loath to abandon his prize, he delayed until June 4th, when Massena evacuated the town. Nothing that Napoleon could have done would have altered this. Further,

Napoleon had now fixed the decisive point in his mind, the Austrian line of communication, and, once this was fixed, nothing would turn him from it; no secondary operations, no detachments, had any value in his eyes—"I only see one thing, the main body of the enemy."

On June 2nd Napoleon entered Milan with little opposition and captured large supplies, of which his army was much in need. But he was annoyed to find that the contingent from Moreau was still a long way off, and this caused the second delay. On June 5th he secured the crossings of the Po, and began to transfer his force to the southern bank.

Melas, in the meantime, had realised his danger. On May 18th he had received information which showed that the French advance from the St. Bernard was a serious move. Of his total force of 80,000, Ott, with nearly 25,000 was besieging Genoa; 28,000 were near Nice; and the rest were scattered in smaller detachments throughout Northern Italy. He gave orders for a concentration towards Alessandria.

The situation on June 7th was an extraordinary one. On this day an Austrian courier was captured, and his despatches contained news of the fall of Genoa and the Austrian concentration towards Alessandria. Napoleon now expected that Melas would try to slip round him, either on the North or South; he therefore kept his force widely distributed, so as to put a barricade across every possible road of escape. It was Napoleon himself who was now on Exterior Lines, while Melas was much better concentrated. In this position, so contrary to all his own principles, Napoleon was not at his best; as has been said, personal control was the keynote of his work; he never trusted anybody who was out of sight; he never believed anything which he could not see himself. His conduct betrayed hesitation; he dashed from point to point—Napoleon always rode at a gallop—in attempts to control his scattered forces.

By the 12th he had collected 24,000 men close to Marengo, but he left 15,000 on the North bank and 6,000 so far to the

East that they never took part in the battle. On the 13th he still further dispersed his force by sending Desaix (who had just arrived from Egypt) with 6,000 men to the South, incase the Austrians should be intending to escape by Genoa. THE BATTLE.—Melas, however, instead of trying to escape round the flanks, seems to have grasped the fact that Napoleon's barricade was so wide that it could not be strong; he therefore decided to crash through the very centre of it. On the morning of June 14th his army (30,000) began to cross the river Bormida, and advanced to the attack in the broad and open plain of Marengo.

Napoleon, who had not expected this direct assault, sent urgent orders to recall Desaix, and contented himself with trying to hold out till this detachment should rejoin him. No other troops were within a day's march. The Austrians, however, were too numerous, and Napoleon had to use his very last Reserve, the 800 men of the Consular Guard. Even these failed to resist the steady pressure, and by two o'clock the French were falling back everywhere, some Divisions in complete disorder. Then a dramatic change occurred.

Melas, thinking the battle was won, betook himself back to Alessandria, leaving his chief of staff to carry out the pursuit of the defeated enemy. This officer formed up solid columns and pushed along the main road on the tail of the French retreat. But he had given his enemy a moment to breathe, and at this point Desaix rejoined from the South. Napoleon, who had been quite disheartened by his defeat, was much comforted by the appearance of this friend, one of the few in whom he had faith. "What think you of the battle?" said Napoleon. "The battle is lost," Desaix replied, "but the day is yet young; there is time enough to win a second one."

At five o'clock Desaix flung his whole Division at the head of the Austrian column, while Kellermann made a desperate cavalry charge on its left flank. The effect was

decisive. The leading Austrian troops broke and fell back in disorder, sweeping away with them those behind, and the whole force never halted till it had got across the river and placed itself under the protection of the walls of Alessandria. As Desaix had said, the second battle was won, but he himself in the moment of victory was mortally wounded.

Next morning Melas sent an officer with a flag of truce, and an agreement was made that the Austrians should evacuate the whole of Upper Italy as far as Mantua.

The passage of the Alps had begun on May 14th, and on June 14th the campaign was over; Napoleon's reputation was still higher than ever. He had gained what he wanted, which was the moral effect of a decisive blow.

Napoleon himself returned to Paris in triumph. But, though the Austrians had lost all the country West of Mantua, their army had not suffered very heavily, and they did not give up hopes of retrieving the situation.

Moreau, with his Army of the Rhine, won a great battle at Hohenlinden in December—it was really a much more brilliant victory than Marengo—and it led the way to the Peace of Luneville, which was signed in February 1801.

By this Treaty Belgium and the west bank of the Rhine were handed over by Austria to France. Austria also resigned all claims on Northern Italy, which once more became, for a few years, the Cisalpine Republic.

COPENHAGEN.—Napoleon was now at peace with all nations except England, and he got a good deal of sympathy from the nations who resented the British dominion of the seas, which was being used in a rather high-handed manner; British cruisers were everywhere, and insisted on the right of search for contraband on neutral ships. The Tsar Paul, who was more than half mad, was always thinking of Constantinople; Napoleon cunningly suggested that Malta would be a useful base for him in the Mediterranean, and by holding out other promises, none of

which were ever fulfilled, he succeeded in establishing a league, consisting of Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia. These states were to remain neutral, but were pledged to resist "the tyranny of England on the seas."

The British Admiralty decided on strong action, and sent a fleet, under Sir Hyde Parker, with Nelson as second-in-command, to visit these "neutrals" and ask them for certain pledges. A very interesting point in naval strategy is brought out by the date of departure of this fleet—the middle of March; at that time of year the open sea is fairly free from ice, but the naval bases of the Revel and Kronstadt are still ice-bound. The British fleet was therefore able to "visit the neutrals" in detail. Copenhagen was visited on April 2nd, and the resultant battle crippled the Danes and they withdrew from the League. Nelson urged a quick visit to Revel, where half the Russian fleet was held in the ice. But the assassination of the Tsar by a clique in his own palace, brought Alexander I to the throne and changed the policy of Russia. The League of Neutrals broke up. Though the action of the British Admiralty was drastic, it is almost certain that the League would have been used as a force against England if the navies had been able to concentrate.

AMIENS.—England, however, was anxious for peace, and negotiations were on foot; in October 1801 the preliminaries of peace were signed at Amiens. Pitt had been succeeded by Addington, a weak and inferior politician, and it was generally considered that Napoleon got very much the best of the terms. England was given Trinidad and Ceylon, but was to relinquish the Cape of Good Hope and the many other Colonies that had been taken in the West Indies, and ultimately was to hand back Malta, which had surrendered in March 1801, to the Knights of St. John. The Treaty in its final form was signed on March 27th, 1802. Scarcely any of its clauses were observed, and even on paper it only held good for fourteen months.

CHAPTER VIII

The Consulate

RECONSTRUCTION.—After Marengo the General sheathed his sword for four years and the Statesman got to work. As this volume is not a history of France, only a brief summary can be made of the great things that were accomplished. They were not dazzling moves, to catch the attention of the mob and win popularity, nor were they political makeshifts to avoid immediate dangers. They were the solid works of a builder who means his edifice to be durable and comfortable, and after that as decorative as may be.

Other great men, such as Confucius, Mahomet, Martin Luther, have moved the souls of nations by giving them new ideals. Though Napoleon himself was full of imagination, his statesmanship was material and practical—it might be called prosaic. The Revolution had begun by being destructive; when people found that their extravagant hopes of reconstruction were not realised, they forgot their ideals in personal wrangling, and then relapsed into hopelessness. Napoleon did not restore their ideals, but he gave them bread, clothing, and material comfort, and thus restored their sanity; he abolished party strife and political agitation—admittedly by force, there being no other way; he suppressed a great deal of selfishness by letting men see that selfish intrigues led to very little; he stopped the scramble for power by being himself the source of all power.

When he had eliminated futile dreams from the minds of men they had time to think of other things, and went back, each to his own business, as a good citizen of his own little town.

Such work may not appeal to higher philosophers; it was tainted with ambition and guile; it brought back class distinctions and respect for artificial authority, which the Revolution had swept away; it led up to the Wars of the Empire; it was reactionary; can any good thing come out of despotism? Well, let the philosophers discuss it. We can be content with one indisputable fact—his work left its impress on French institutions and the French national character, and France is still the richer for it.

THE CONCORDAT.—Before the Revolution the Church had been powerful and wealthy. There is no need to discuss here its value from the religious or moral point of view; our interests lie in its social and political influence. Its higher branches were closely entwined with the old *régime*, and it was therefore regarded as an enemy by the Revolutionists; the Assembly, jealous of the Pope's power of interference, set itself to cut France adrift from Rome. And as the Church held about one-sixth part of the whole wealth of the nation, it was very convenient at the same time to lay hands on its temporalities.

As early as 1790 the orthodox religion was disestablished and its properties sequestrated; what became known as the Constitutional Priesthood was re-established, on a very secular basis. Priests were to be allowed to remain in their cures only on the condition that they took an oath which put the French Government before the Spiritual Power; such as accepted were to receive their stipends from the State, the others were to be exiled; the higher ranks, instead of receiving preferment from the Pope, were to be elected.

Naturally this raised a storm; it was in direct opposition to every law and every tradition of the very conservative organisation of Rome. A large proportion of the priests—over 50,000—refused to take the oath, and preferred exile and even death for conscience' sake; these were known as

the Nonjurists, and their power was immense. The Church had not incurred the unpopularity of the Court; the Monarchy had become unpopular in the provinces because its visible signs, in the eyes of the people, were the *seigneurs* with their rights, the *corvée*, and the tax-gatherer; these were enough to undermine inborn respect and provide texts for debates in the clubs. The Church was not involved in these iniquities, and the local priests were healers and comforters of their flocks. There was a deep sense of religion among the peasants, who had been educated on strictly orthodox lines; many who were not devout were superstitious, others were moved by reverence, often by affection, for their own pastors; others still felt that the abolition of religion would lower the standards of family life and the decency of public life—especially as no substitute for the Church was suggested, except fantastic "philosophy." The Disestablishment was not an attack by heretics or reformers who could offer a new religion, it was a political move to suppress conservative influence.

Much has been written from the moral point of view, and it has been suggested, even by devout men, that the Church had need of some such movement to revivify it. However that may be, the immediate result of Disestablishment was to destroy any hope of unity in the nation. It was the influence of the priests which tore up the decrees of the Assembly; it was the banners of the Church which formed the rallying-points for the risings in the West and South; not only devout Catholics, but royalists, conservatives, and all the discontented elements, even bandits, raised their voices and their arms against the atheists of Paris; nay, even our sturdy English heretics found themselves fighting side by side with non-juring priests. We like to think that the cause was the Legitimate Monarchy, but our Allies in La Vendée and elsewhere thought more of their old Church than of their old *régime*. For ten years France was torn by civil war. This must not be confused with the party

strifes, which were settled in the streets of Paris with barricades, grape-shot, and the guillotine; it was a cleavage in the nation.

Napoleon saw that this was sapping the resources of the country. Frenchmen were killing each other instead of fighting side by side; munitions and money had to be sent to the West instead of to the Rhine.

Besides this, though not a moral man, he saw that indecency and licence inevitably led to corruption, which he regarded as the worst canker that ever attacked the heart of a State. He did not attempt to impose religion or virtue by Government decrees; he was content to restore outward morality by influence; and in the priests he saw valuable allies, so he set himself to win them.

It was a mighty task—to restore the influence of the priesthood without abrogating any of his own power. There were long negotiations and much bargaining, and Napoleon showed more delicacy in this than in any of his other schemes, which were generally more distinguished by forcefulness than tact. In the end he had his way, and the result was the celebrated *Concordat*, signed in July 1802.

The French Government recognised the religion of Rome as the religion of the majority of the nation; it was to be freely and publicly practised; the First Consul was to nominate the sixty Bishops, and the Pope was to bestow on them canonical investiture; the Church lands were not to be restored, but suitable stipends were to be paid by the State: and the clergy were to make a promise of fidelity to the Constitution which implied no denial of the authority of Rome. It looks simple enough when reduced to a few words, but in reality it was as complex as anything well could be; religion and power, tradition and conscience, politics and finance, all had to be considered and reconciled, and it was only by a mixture of tenacity and subtleness that the *Concordat*, as it was well named, was reached.

By making peace with the Church Napoleon undermined

the position of the royalists. There were a few plots, but they were confined to narrow circles, and could be dealt with by the police instead of by armies. He could also afford to deal strongly with them; before the *Concordat* an executed rebel became a martyr of the Church, and harsh measures only sowed dragons' teeth. But now Louis XVI was gone; the little Dauphin had died, a victim of cruelty and brutality; the Comte de Provence, the future Louis XVIII, was not a personality to inspire martyrdom, so the royalist cause no longer drew the hearts of the people; it was confined to a few fanatics, ruined *émigrés*, and their English friends. So safe was the situation that Napoleon could encourage *émigrés* to return—to receive them and employ them at his own Court.

The *Concordat* re-established the unity of the nation. FINANCE.—Nothing shows better the real popularity of Napoleon's rule than the speedy improvement in matters of finance. He restored confidence; confidence begat credit; credit begat trade; and trade begat prosperity. Nobody would willingly lend to the Directory, because it was well known that half the money would disappear into private pockets before anything reached the Treasury; capitalists therefore concealed their wealth, for fear that a forced loan might take it from them. At the end of '99 the Treasury was empty, credit exhausted, public debts disavowed. Napoleon's rise to power changed all this. Bankers and capitalists advanced considerable sums as voluntary loans; other loans, not so voluntary, were obtained from the young republics which were dependent on France. This provided ready money for immediate use.

Then the Statesman turned to the bigger question of balancing future budgets. It was not so difficult as it might have seemed a few months earlier. Internal peace implied enormous savings on military expenditure, and also brought a big increase in the revenue. A further increase was made by a reasonable distribution of the taxes and a

properly supervised system of gathering them; as an organiser of such machinery Napoleon was unsurpassable, and he had a fine instinct for collecting golden eggs without disturbing the goose.

France, in spite of all she had gone through, was a rich country. The Revolution had taken the land from the Church and the aristocrats, and made it over to small proprietors; the peasant is thrifty and hardworking, and he found a new incentive in the thought that he was working for himself. When the husband was called up for conscription the goodwife carried on the farm; when the oxen were requistioned for the army the children were set to scratch the soil with a hand-plough. So agriculture struggled on through the bad days. Then the conscript was released, and came home with a little money saved from his pay or a gold piece in his pocket (picked up at Milan); he bought a new pig, and the family became rich; next year the eldest girl could have two cows as a *dot*, and as Jean B'tiste from the next village wanted cows, after some bargaining he took Antoinette to wife; history does not say whether they lived happily, but they certainly multiplied exceedingly. All this, mark you, because that droll fellow the First Consul has hung the last tax-gatherer, who was a *scélérat*, as we all know; and this same Consul is the little corporal who got us our pay and some shoes; and they say he is going to send back Père Ambrose and the blessed saints to the village church—that ought to improve the next harvest; and our poor neighbour, whose pig died prematurely, has gone to Cherbourg and got a fine job on the new fortifications which are going to keep out the *sacrés Anglais*. Crache-moi les Anglais et Vive Bonaparte.

Agriculture is booming, and the merchant finds that new roads and canals have eased the transport question so much that he can make an honest profit without asking a prohibitive price; you can get a loaf for two *sous* and two herrings for three *sous* at the *boutique* in the corner of the *place*.

Trade is booming, and the capitalist finds that the Funds, which stood at 6 to 10 in December, are worth 40 to 50 in July. Pitt thought we were bankrupt, did he? Well, let him ask again, and the financier Gaudin will tell him.

THE CODE.—The Laws of France had consisted of a medley of edicts, customs, and privileges, many of them centuries old, many of them new fantasies of the Assemblies; half of them were inapplicable on account of their age, some contradicted others, many were unjust, and all were unintelligible to the ordinary mind. Attempts had been made by the Assembly to improve them, and some materials had been collected, but after a few long-winded debates the effort died a natural death. Such a state of affairs, almost legal anarchy, was an abomination to Napoleon's methodical mind, and although the first idea was not altogether his own, it was only a man of his will-power who could have seen his way to carry through so great a reform. He appointed a commission of learned jurists to make a complete revision, but often presided himself, and the name "Code Napoleon" has justly been given to the work.

The first part, the Code Civile, came out in 1801; the other parts concerning procedure, commerce, and crime, were not finished till near the end of his reign; they form a complete text of the Law of France, and have only been altered to suit modern requirements; the spirit and the method remain to this day. Those who are qualified to judge have pronounced the Code to be a masterpiece.

To put these laws into effect it was necessary to reform the Law Courts and machinery of justice. The system of electing judges, which had been established by the Assembly, was open to abuse and corruption; this was abolished; judges were appointed by the Government, and Courts of Appeal were formed.

Closely connected with the reform of the law was the reform of local government. The Revolution had

demanded that everything should be elective; every village had its commune, and tried to manage its own affairs—"France was split into 40,000 Republics"—but the country was not sufficiently educated to grapple with its own administration; inexperience and corruption broke down well-meant efforts. Worst of all, the taxes were either not collected or were unjustly assessed. Napoleon replaced the elected officials with educated men from Paris; he has been blamed about this—it was reactionary, it reverted to the centralisation of the old Monarchy, it tended towards despotism. But indisputably it collected revenue, restored order, and put down corruption; it suited the nation so well that his system of prefects and *maires* has survived.

These three transactions, with the Church, the Law, and Finance, were the big triumphs of the Consul, and stamp him as one of the finest statesmen that ever served a State. Each one of them was a thing of beauty in itself, and they lent each other strength; as has been explained, the influence of the Church, though reactionary, restored unity and stopped civil strife; the fact that much of the Code still survives is a proof of its merit; the financial policy can be valued in hard cash by the quotations of the Funds.

Rightly to appreciate them we must look back as well as forward. Napoleon had tried in vain to make bricks without straw in the land of the Pharaohs, but here in France he built a solid edifice, though he started his building on foundations which the Directory had left in a state of liquidation. No one else would have had the boldness to attempt such tasks; the ordinary politician would have done a little tinkering and made a few promises; Napoleon was, of course, assisted in some of the details by experts, but the big designs were his conceptions, and could never have been carried through without the confidence which he inspired.

LEGION OF HONOUR.—The institution of the Legion of Honour has been criticised as reactionary. "*Egalité*"

had been one of the cries of the *citoyens*, and class distinctions had been effaced; but Napoleon's belief in his own superiority was too great to admit such an idea as the equality of all mankind. He believed in emulation as a means of encouraging valour, merit, science, art, hard work—in fact, all the qualities that help to build up a state. The Legion was an effective means of inspiration—and "*Honneur*" touched, and still touches, the heart of the gallant French nation. It was thrown open to all classes, and appears to have been awarded with wonderful fairness. But as the awards were in Napoleon's own hands it was undeniably a step in the edifice of despotism.

THE COURT.—Yet another step towards the Empire was the strict formality and precedence instituted in the Palaces of the Tuileries and St. Cloud, but in some ways this bordered on the ludicrous. Napoleon's own attitude towards it was governed by his moods and whims; he loved the adulation of princes and courtiers, though he despised them; he hated the expenditure on decorations and liveries; he grudged the waste of valuable hours; he was bored with the artificiality of the women and the dullness of his badly-educated officers; sometimes he amused himself by frightening them. When preoccupied with his own thoughts he was abrupt and rude, when familiar he was vulgar, and he was more feared than loved. Bourienne and Madame de Rémusat have left vivid pictures of the pompous and rather tawdry pageant.

PLOTS.—But though he succeeded, by action that was at once firm and conciliatory, in appeasing the masses of the nation, his conduct caused alarm to some of the extremists. The royalists had hoped that he meant to recall the Bourbons, but were soon undeceived, and though many *émigrés* returned, there was a remnant of irreconcilables. Amongst the Republicans and Jacobins there was even stronger discontent; the *Concordat*, by bringing back the

influence of the priests, had helped to impose discipline in the place of terror, and it did not suit the class of political adventurers who had sprung from the Assembly. At least two plots were laid against the life of the First Consul; the first, in October 1800, was revealed by an informer; the members were arrested, and four of them were afterwards guillotined. In December 1800 the second came nearer success. As the Court was driving to the opera a bomb was exploded between the carriages of Napoleon and Josephine, and, though neither of them was hurt, a dozen spectators were killed or wounded. Napoleon remained calm, but afterwards used the occasion to exile 130 undesirable Jacobins. After his decision had been made it was found that the plot had been engineered by royalists, two of whom were captured and executed, but this did not save the Jacobins from exile.

NOTE.—Since the above was written I have read a new book by A. L. Guérard. His object is to clear up the "legendary" part of the story of Napoleon. But with regard to the Code he seems to miss the point. "Of all the legends which form a halo round the Consulate and Empire there is none more legendary than that of Napoleon descending alone, like Moses from Mount Sinai, with the tablets of the law in this hands." He then shows that lawyers drafted the Code, and some of the work had been done before Napoleon ever came to Paris.

But the great point is that while other people talked about things Napoleon carried them through, and this is the real merit of his rule. There was no lack of beautiful ideas in France; orators had been demanding civil peace, cheaper bread, improvement in finance, and other reforms; but ten years of talk had produced nothing. Napoleon actually carried them out.

CHAPTER IX

The Crisis

Nearly all authors agree that Napoleon achieved great things in 1800, '01, and '02, though some of them refuse to see anything but selfish ambition in his motives. They agree that in later years there was a vital change, and he was destroying, in part at least, the fine edifice which he himself had built. Those people who can see white as well as black in him will find an interesting problem in psychology. When did the big change occur, and what were the causes of it? We have come to the period when this question may be discussed, and can consider the opinion of some authors who have judged him.

Lord Wolseley is uncompromising in his condemnation, and sees no change in character, because it could go no lower than it had always been; Napoleon was a military genius but a "pre-eminently bad man": "His whole career, from childhood to the day of his death, was one great untruth, and was made up of deceit, treachery, and the most appalling and selfish indifference to the feelings and wants of others—was, in fact, one great and unholy deception"; "He could even cleverly pretend a feeling of generous and magnanimous impulse when he thought it would pay him to do so." In fact, Lord Wolseley, in his book, *The Decline and Fall*, sees no decline of character, but a decline of military capacity due to pains in the stomach.

Lord Rosebery, in the final chapter of *The Last Phase*, has given us a magnificent analysis of Napoleon's character which ought to be studied by those who are interested in the subject.

"For the first period of his Consulate he was an almost ideal ruler. He was firm, sagacious, far-seeing, energetic, just. . . . Whom God wishes to destroy, says the adage, He first deprives of sanity. And so we see Napoleon, with incredible self-delusion, want of insight, or both, preparing his own destruction by dealing with men as if they were chequers, and moving them about the board according to his own momentary whim, without a thought of their own passions, or character, or traditions. . . . We hold, then, that the Emperor had lost the balance of his faculties long before he finally fell. But this is not to say that he was mad; sanity is a relative term. Napoleon at his outset was phenomenally sane. . . . At what period the overbalancing of this great intellect took place it is impossible to say, for the process was of necessity gradual. Some may incline to think that it was apparent even before he became Emperor; that the lawless abduction and wanton execution of D'Enghien may mark the beginning. . . . It is sufficient for our purpose to point out that the alteration did occur, and that the Napoleon of 1810, for example, was a very different being to the Napoleon of 1801. . . . We must regretfully attribute this alienation (of his old friends), discreditable as it is to the deserters, as still more discreditable to Napoleon himself . . . and yet we must not distribute this judgment over the whole of his career; it applies only to that part of it which was essentially imperial and partially insane. Until he chose to make a demigod of himself, and deliberately cut himself off from humanity, he was kind, generous, and affectionate; at any rate, if that be too partial a judgment, he was certainly not the reverse." Lord Rosebery therefore sees a change of character, but fixes no date for it.

Several authors, perhaps wisely, have refused to pass judgment, and declare that such a genius cannot be measured by human standards, as he is a law unto himself (this is Napoleon's own view).

If I rush in, it is not in happy confidence of squaring the circle, but in hopes of drawing a few lines which may serve as guides through the maze of events which follow.

Let it be granted that a change occurred some time between 1800 and 1810—can we narrow down this period? Looking at *facts:* in the three years ending '02 there is the fact that he bridled the Revolution without bloodshed, there is the *Concordat,* which stopped civil war, there is the peace with England, there is internal reform—all pacific facts of which any statesman would be proud. In the following three years we shall see that the outstanding facts are very different—the renewal of war with all Europe, the execution of D'Enghien, the annexation of Northern Italy—all bellicose facts. The contrast points to some change, of policy at least, if not of character, somewhere about the years '02 and '03.

THE ROYAL NAVY.—What brought about the change? I suggest it was the British Navy. This was the one force which had thwarted him. Up to this time it may be said that he had encountered the British Navy on four occasions; he could recall Toulon with satisfaction, but on the other three occasions the Navy had foiled him, and in a way that not only checked his plans, but touched his personal vanity on its most sensitive spot. First at the Battle of the Nile—Napoleon seldom spoke of this; I suggest that in thinking over the campaign in cold blood he felt that he ought to have foreseen that battle. Did a small voice whisper that he had sinned against the laws of strategy—the laws which he held most sacred? Did it hint that he was not quite infallible, not quite invulnerable; that even Napoleon might have a heel of Achilles? Of course, he would never admit such weakness, but it rankled; it was his own mistake that made defeat so bitter, and implanted in him undying hatred of the British Navy. Next at Acre—" j'ai manqué á ma fortune à Acre "—but he took care to explain that it was the plague which had baulked him there. Then there was the big

affair of Malta; by *his own error* he made it possible for England to become owner of that island; up to May '98 it had been under the Knights, and England could never have touched it without giving offence, especially to the Tsar, who wanted to become the Protector of the Order. But when Napoleon took it over, turned out the Knights, and put in a French garrison, he thereby made it a perfectly fair object for attack. Malta surrendered to the British in September 1800. At that time he had everything else his own way; he had recovered Italy and had broken up the alliance of his enemies; but his success had spoilt him and increased his vanity, which became all the more sensitive to the crumpled roseleaf—the roseleaf being the British Navy—which he himself had introduced. Therefore he wanted to get on terms with his own vanity by effacing all sign of his mistakes—and the visible sign was the White Ensign fluttering in Malta Harbour. In making the Treaty of Amiens he insisted on the evacuation of Malta by the British. He did not demand it for France; he would be content to let the Knights have it—but the British must go. Addington consented to hand over the island to the Knights "under the protection of some third Power." When difficulties arose about a new protector, Napoleon proposed that the fortifications of Valetta should be blown up! When the First Consul refused to carry out certain clauses of the Treaty of Amiens, the British Government kept hold of Malta as a guarantee, and this roused him to fury. He widened his hatred of the Navy to hatred of the nation.

THE RENEWAL OF WAR.—It is not suggested that the Navy was his sole cause of quarrel with England; there was always a suspicion that the British Government was still supporting the Bourbons; and, indeed, there was scarcely any point on which mutual confidence was possible. But Holland Rose, in a very convincing argument, proves that Malta was the main cause of the renewal of war. The French authority, Thiers, arguing from another point of view,

states that Malta was the one insuperable bar to peace, but that it was the obstinacy of the British Cabinet on this point that led to war. The Cabinet was obstinate, but Napoleon was unreasonable, and when steel meets flint there may be fire.

Napoleon always failed to understand England. He thought that the House of Commons represented the nation—a mistake which other foreigners have made; he used to have the debates translated, and read them eagerly. Whigs and Tories were abusing each other—*une idée qu'ils ont.* The Rt. Hon. Charles James Fox (Whig) thought that the Rt. Hon. William Pitt (Tory) was the "greatest curse the country ever had." Other speeches by other Honourable Members were reported daily. Napoleon took these speeches quite seriously; half England was evidently on his side; such brilliant abuse would have been followed up by a knife in Corsica or the guillotine in France. In England it was followed—by a Coalition Government! Three years later Fox was Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Cabinet which was waging war against Napoleon, and was sitting on the Treasury Bench side by side with rabid Tories. *Perfides Anglais!*

The British nation understood such speeches (if it read them), and woke up on the declaration of war, accepted any Government, voted money, and enlisted itself in the Volunteers.

Napoleon made mistakes, not only about the nation, but about the Cabinet as well. In the Treaty of Amiens Addington had made sacrifices in good faith for the sake of peace; Napoleon thought these were signs of weakness, wherein perhaps he was right, but he did not understand that there might be limits to British weakness; he thought that by bullying and threatening he might get something more. A certain French colonel, by name Sebastiani, had been sent to Egypt to examine the situation there. On Jan. 30th, 1803, his report was published in Paris;

it was insulting to the British general who commanded, and contained such expressions as "Six thousand French would at present be enough to conquer Egypt." The publication caused a sensation even in France, and it is incredible that Napoleon should have allowed it, unless he had decided on war, or else thought that the threats it contained would frighten Addington. But it was just the one thing that made Addington's Cabinet popular in England; when the nation heard that it was being threatened by this young upstart there were no more sacrifices.

Lord Whitworth, the British Ambassador in Paris, showed considerable patience in the negotiations which followed, but he was firm. Even Joseph Bonaparte and Talleyrand pressed Napoleon to use a more conciliatory tone, but in vain; the First Consul simply ignored the "diplomatic representations" of Whitworth, and repeated his complaints that Malta had not been evacuated. Was the word Malta engraved upon his heart?

On March 8th the British Parliament voted the embodiment of the Militia and an addition of 10,000 seamen to the Navy. This provoked another scene between Napoleon and Whitworth, which the latter recounts.

On May 2nd the Ambassador asked for his passports, and war was officially declared on May 16th, 1803. This began the great struggle between the Master of the Land and the Mistress of the Seas which lasted over twelve years.

THE CHANGE.—The first months of 1803 were the crisis of Napoleon's career. It may be an open question whether it was Napoleon or England who desired the war, but it is indisputable that Napoleon's attitude and tone throughout the negotiations showed bad temper; his manner had always been abrupt, but now it betrayed studied rudeness—as even his brother and his friends have admitted.

To revert to the problem set forth at the beginning of this chapter, the following reconstruction of the tragedy is

suggested. Napoleon had been worsted by the British Navy at the Nile, Acre, and Malta, and a subconscious knowledge of his own mistakes humiliated him; he was fairly honest in making the Peace of Amiens, but insisted, from personal vanity, that England should evacuate Malta. When thwarted over this he lost his temper and tried bullying; when this produced no effect he lost all restraint and became a changed man. For some time he had been growing more and more vain as the result of his successes elsewhere, and the change in character was not altogether sudden, but the question of Malta brought about the crisis, and the results were sudden. The change took place when he allowed the publication of Sebastiani's report—that is to say, in January 1803.

It may be mentioned that this suggestion in no way contradicts either Holland Rose, or Lord Rosebery, or M. Thiers.

It was not only a change of policy but also a change of character; his will-power, his capacity, his skill as a soldier, remained unimpaired, and for five more years he was still the Man of Destiny; but the ultimate object was changed—it was no longer to heal the wounds of France, it was to heal the wounds of his own vanity.

CHAPTER X

The Duc D'Enghien

PLOT AND COUNTERPLOT.—The renewal of war naturally raised hopes in the French royalists. Up to the Treaty of Amiens the Court of St. James had openly declared sympathy with the House of Bourbon, and on more than one occasion had sent ships and men to La Vendée to assist the risings there. The *Concordat* and the Peace had put an end to this, and, as England had recognised the First Consul, the Bourbon supporters found themselves in a hopeless position. Now, however, on the renewal of war, they began their plots again. The Bourbon Pretenders were the Comte De Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII, who was living in Warsaw, and the Comte D'Artois, afterwards Charles X, who was living in London at 46 Baker Street; both were brothers of Louis XVI. It was known that many true Republicans had begun to resent the airs which the First Consul was giving himself, and foresaw that he was moving towards open despotism. A list of the malcontents prepared by D'Artois includes the names of Moreau, Pichegru, Bernadotte, Massena, Sieyès, Carnot, Barras; and the idea was that Republicans should unite with royalists to overthrow the Dictator. The British Government was invited to become patron and paymaster of the conspiracy. Holland Rose, by careful research, has proved that at least some of the junior officials were aware of the plot, and handed over funds; but he insists that they had no idea that the object was assassination; probably only a few of the plotters knew this; the ostensible plan was

to send over some French officers to La Vendée, to rouse the peasants who had shown such heroism before.

The real plot, however, was assassination, and the leader chosen to command the desperadoes was the famous Georges Cadoudal. This man was a magnificent specimen of the Breton peasant, of enormous physical strength, of shrewd but bold character, and with the power of a leader of men. He had been well known for years as one of the foremost of the royalists in the West; when the priests made peace with Napoleon he refused to be reconciled, and took himself off to England. In August 1803 Cadoudal was sent over to Paris, and there he began to enlist trustworthy followers; the plot was being laid.

The counterplot was chiefly the work of a certain Méhée de la Touche. This scoundrel had been condemned for the "Bomb Plot" and exiled, but decided to reinstate himself by becoming one of Napoleon's tools; he acted as *agent provocateur*, and succeeded so well that when he went over to London he was taken into the confidence of royalists and British officials. Through him, therefore, Napoleon knew everything that was going on, but he did not want to make arrests too soon—a plot which included royalists, Republicans, and, above all, English gold, was just what was needed to increase his own popularity and to rouse more hatred against the *perfides*; he was especially anxious to catch Moreau, who was the most celebrated soldier after himself and the most influential Republican.

Pichegru, who was undoubtedly in the plot, approached Moreau, who, however, would have nothing to do with either assassinations or Bourbons; but the fact that he met Pichegru several times was sufficient to warrant his arrest. In February and the beginning of March 1804 Moreau, Pichegru, Cadoudal, and others were arrested and tried. Moreau was sentenced to imprisonment, but Napoleon allowed him to go to America; Cadoudal was condemned to death and sent to the scaffold; Pichegru strangled

himself in prison; some other conspirators were pardoned.

So far as these men were concerned, Napoleon was perfectly just; when such plots were being laid he cannot be blamed for counterplotting, and the trials were open and fair. He might surely have been content with this success—the *émigrés* and English officials had received such a warning that no more such plots were ever thought of. But, with the vicious perversity which henceforward seems to dominate him, he plunged into a crime which has stained his name for ever.

THE DUC D'ENGHIEN.—The Duc D'Enghien was one of the princely House of Condé, related to the Bourbons, but in no way a pretender to the throne. He had emigrated in the first days of the Revolution, and now, at thirty-four years of age, was living in a village called Ettenheim, in Baden, close to the Rhine. He seems to have spent his time quietly in the company of his young wife, and to have had no connection whatever with Cadoudal. Méhée de la Touche, however, had come over from England and hung about the village; as was natural, he made a report, to show his own astuteness and importance; he said that the Duc had been in company with Dumouriez. Now Dumouriez, a former leader of the Girondins, had made his abode in London, and was well known as an opponent of Napoleon and an acquaintance of Cadoudal; he had never been near Ettenheim. There was, however, a harmless old gentleman there, by name Thuméry, who was a friend of the Duc, and it seems that the similarity in the pronunciations of the names *Dumouriez—Thuméry* caused the mistake which led to the tragedy. At first Napoleon really believed that the Duc was in Cadoudal's plot. A council was held, at which he proposed to send a party to effect the arrest. This would mean violation of neutral territory of the Elector of Baden, and the other Consuls, Lebrun and Cambacérès,

pointed out the excitement which such a step would cause throughout Europe. Talleyrand supported Napoleon, and the others eventually submitted. Orders were issued.

Early on March 15th a special party of thirty picked gendarmes crossed the frontier and seized the Duc, who was sent to the Fort of Vincennes, South-east of Paris.

Even up to this point excuses might have been made for Napoleon's action if an open trial had followed; but the trial was a mockery. Napoleon had found out that the report of the spy was false, so the ground of accusation was rapidly changed. The Duc was now charged with intending to take part in the war against France; the trial was to be held in secret. When Murat, who was Governor of Paris, was told to assemble a court-martial he exclaimed, "What! Are they trying to soil my uniform? I will not allow it! Let him appoint them himself if he wants to!" But on receiving a second order he obeyed. The seven senior officers in Paris were assembled, and they were given an order not to separate until judgment was passed. Savary who had been acting as Napoleon's agent throughout the affair, was present.

The Duc admitted that he had asked to be taken into the British Army, and that he had borne arms against Napoleon in the open field, but he denied any complicity with Cadoudal; he then demanded an interview with the First Consul. The court was prepared to grant this request, but Savary, declared that the step was *inopportune.*

The Duc was condemned, and immediately taken out to the moat of the fort, where he was shot, and then buried in a grave which had been dug in accordance with orders received the day before.

An attempt has been made to show that Napoleon sent a pardon by a General Réal, who, however, was too late, but the accounts of Madame de Rémusat and others showed that Napoleon was in touch with the court up to the last moment, and all those who had any knowledge of the arrest seem

to have felt that the Duc was sentenced before the trial. It was significant that the grave was dug beforehand.

Five weeks before Napoleon died he called for his last will, and inserted the following words: "I caused the Duc D'Enghien to be arrested and judged, because it was necessary for the safety, the interest, and the honour of the French people when the Comte D'Artois, by his own confession, was supporting sixty assassins at Paris. In similar circumstances I would act in the same way again." These words imply that the motive was the same as in the case of the Turks at Jaffa, which Von Wartenburg stated as "*Salus publica summa lex.*" If we are to accept that law for war, why not for peace also?

But let us add, for the credit of his apologists, that this excuse has not been offered; no one suggests that the death of D'Enghien was "necessary for the safety of the French people"; it was obviously a personal matter. Attempts have been made to throw a share of the blame on Talleyrand, to draw comparisons with other cases, and to divert attention from it by crying shame on the British Government for the Cadoudal plot; but it is admitted that the Duc D'Enghien was shot, not only without mercy, but without justice. Even Madame Mère upbraided her son hotly, and his followers all seem to have been struck with horror.

Lord Rosebery notes that some people regard this affair as the first sign of that period of Napoleon's career which was "partially insane." Insanity would account for it; but it is difficult to accept insanity as a plea for a man who was still so sane in some respects.

Panic, caused by fear of assassination, might account for it; there are clear cases in history of men in high places whose nerves, strong in ordinary circumstances, have been worn out by fear of the unknown, and in moments of immediate danger they have lost their reason. In hot blood Napoleon was brave; at Toulon and Arcole he led

what were practically forlorn hopes; later on, in 1809, he was wounded while urging on his front line at Ratisbon. In cold blood he showed himself fearless in visiting the victims of plague, and after the "Bomb Plot" he had given no signs of shattered nerves.

It seems more likely that the motive was *Vendetta*, which for centuries had been recognised in the land of his birth as a method of justice. According to its rules a man was permitted—nay, was bound—to murder in cold blood a member of the family with whom there was a blood feud; the victim might be perfectly and obviously innocent, that mattered not; it was not even taken into consideration. If this be applied to Napoleon's case, we see that the blood feud was with England; he was at war with the British Government, but it had also become a personal feud because he believed that the Government had instigated Cadoudal's plot; he therefore determined to kill without trial someone connected with England. He would have chosen a prominent Englishman if he had been able to lay hands on one; failing this, he tried to inveigle the Comte D'Artois over to France by the machinations of Savary and De la Touche, but these attempts did not succeed. He therefore turned to the nearest available victim and did him to death, knowing him to be innocent, and after full deliberation. This theory explains his leniency to Moreau, who, as a Republican, was not "in the family" of the monarchial English; it also dispenses with the pleas of insanity and panic, which in any case could not be proved.

But though vendetta may explain his action, it is no excuse whatever, because he broke the first law of the vendetta itself. The law was that murder became a sacred duty when it avenged *another person*, who was a relative, even a distant one, perhaps some generations back. Therefore, if an attempt had been made, say, against his mother, vendetta would have vindicated Napoleon for avenging her on an innocent person. But Napoleon was avenging himself.

Stress has been laid on this tragedy, first, because it supports the theory of change; there can be no doubt that after this Napoleon was selfish and unrestrained. Secondly, because it had some very curious results in other ways. Incredible as it may seem, it is generally accepted as having afforded a stepping-stone towards the establishment of the Empire, as will be explained later, and it certainly was an important factor in the creation of the Third Coalition.

CHAPTER XI

The Empire

THE POLITICIAN.—After the Cadoudal plot Napoleon said: "They seek to destroy the Revolution by attacking my person; I will defend it, for I am the Revolution." The humour of these words lies in the fact that they were spoken in 1804, just when he was about to reveal himself openly as an irresponsible autocrat. It is true that he was an heir of the Revolution and was bitterly opposed to the old *régime* and its abuses; but as a matter of fact, nobody hated revolution more than he did. His political activities were not destructive, because there was practically nothing to destroy; he abolished the Directory and the Councils, but they were already dying a natural death. Brumaire was only the *coup de grâce*. He abolished some of the electoral powers, and has therefore been accused of trampling on democracy; but on the other hand, the nation elected him, first as Consul, then as Consul for life, and finally as Emperor, in each case by an enormous majority; even the most bitter of Napoleon's detractors have not ventured to argue that the nation was against him at this time.

He had the gift—the greatest gift a politician can possess—of appearing to carry out the will of the people when in reality he was carrying out his own plans. Rarely has anyone been so clever in adapting the circumstances of the moment to his private ends. For example, when he made peace it was hailed with delight—everybody wanted peace and rest; when he made war it was hailed with enthusiasm—everybody was eager for glory and mad with hatred of England.

He had a second gift—that of doing things at the right

moment. One side of his nature was impatient, but it was balanced by his soldierly instinct for previous preparation, which led him to till the soil thoroughly before he planted his seed and gathered his crop. In his movement towards Empire, the man who called himself "Revolution" was a consummate politician.

STEPS TO THE THRONE.—We have seen that after Brumaire Sieyès was allowed to plan a Constitution which made Napoleon First Consul for ten years; that Constitution was allowed to act just as far as it suited the First Consul, and he never quarrelled with it. After Marengo this power was too great for anyone to dispute, but he waited to let the masses digest the fact before he ascended higher. The Peace of Amiens was hailed, not only as a relief from war, but also as a personal triumph for Napoleon, and the thanks of the people were expressed in making him Consul for life. This, of course, was a step towards a hereditary title. He immediately made some changes in the Constitution to strengthen his position. The laws of France were still enacted by the Legislature, but debates were suppressed; the Senate was responsible for maintaining the Constitution; out of the 120 members the Consul nominated 40, and had a considerable share in appointing the remainder, so he need fear no opposition in that quarter. The executive power was entirely in his own hands.

From this strong position it was only a short step to the throne, provided that a suitable moment could be found, and this was offered by the Cadoudal plot, of which the most was made. France was told that the Bourbons and the English were determined to destroy Napoleon and bring back the old *régime*; the land would be taken away from the peasant; the aristocrats would regain their old privileges; all the revolutionaries would be executed; liberty would be enslaved by British gold.

Next, an ingenious argument was raised—if the hereditary system were adopted, these horrible plots would be

useless, because, even if Napoleon himself were killed, there would be a successor to take his place and fight for the liberty of France. After this had been put before the Senate a commission of members was named to draw up a report on hereditary rule. This gave time for petitions in favour of the hereditary principle to come in from all parts of France and for Napoleon to display a little becoming modesty.

There was, however, no doubt about the result. On May 18th, 1804, the Senate passed the decree which made Napoleon Emperor of the French, and it was confirmed by a plebiscite of the nation.

Once this was an accomplished fact Napoleon made his position doubly secure by promoting the leading men of France to be high dignitaries of the Empire, and therefore his devoted adherents. The two Consuls, Talleyrand, and others were awarded big sounding titles, with suitable emoluments.

Fourteen generals received the baton of field-marshal—Berthier, Murat, Massena, Augerau, Lannes, Jourdan, Ney, Soult, Brune, Davoust, Bessieres, Moncey, Mortier, and Bernadotte.

The Bonaparte family became Imperial Highnesses. But it was with his own brothers and sisters that he had the most trouble. Though none of them had his genius they were not without a strain of the Bonaparte wilfulness and ambition, and this came out when the question of succession was raised. As Napoleon had no children his brothers would be his natural heirs, but, for some reason which has been much discussed, he would not agree to this, and the trouble began.

Joseph had daughters but no sons. Louis had married Josephine's daughter, Hortense Beauharnais, and it was suggested that their son, Charles Napoleon, should be nominated as heir. This, however, was opposed by Louis; he did not want to be cut out himself from the succession,

and, further, he had conceived an insensate jealousy of Napoleon, whom he believed to have an affection for Hortense. The other two brothers had disgusted Napoleon by their marriages. Lucien had wedded the deserted wife of a stockbroker; Jerome, aged nineteen, was serving in the French Navy, on the American coast, and married a Miss Patterson of Baltimore.

After a series of quarrels the matter was left in a vague form, the succession being vested in the family of Napoleon, his legitimate or adopted son, or the heirs male of Joseph and Louis.

THE CORONATION.—It remained to impress the masses with the dignity of the new power. This was done at the coronation on December 2nd, '04. No expense or trouble was spared to make the ceremony as gorgeous as possible, and the pageant was the most brilliant that Paris had ever seen.

As a final touch the aged Pope, Pius VII, was induced to come from the Vatican to bestow his blessing and the holy oil, thus making Napoleon the equal in rank of the Emperors of the Roman Empire.

The visit of the Pope gave Josephine an opportunity. For a long time she had felt divorce hanging over her, not on account of her unfaithfulness, but because she could not give her husband an heir. When the coronation ceremony had been arranged she let the Pope know that her marriage had been only a civil contract. The Pontiff was horrified at the idea of crowning an Empress whose marriage was not recognised by the Church, and he insisted that a religious ceremony should be performed. Napoleon seems to have raised no objection; indeed, he could scarcely do so, for the Pope was quite firm, and it would have incurred ridicule if the arrangements for the coronation were upset at the last moment. They were secretly married by Napoleon's uncle, Cardinal Fesch, two days before the big event

The great ceremony took place in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. First came the religious part—the anointing and the blessing. Napoleon then crowned himself and the Empress, after which they proceeded to the Grand Throne. The Pope pronounced "*Vivat Imperator in æternum,*" and a Mass was sung. After this the Pope and his cardinals retired while the Emperor took the constitutional oath.

The festivities continued for many days, and all the public bodies strove to outdo each other in honouring the occasion.

In the following May there was another coronation at Milan, where Napoleon placed on his own head the Iron Crown of Lombardy, crying, "God has given it to me; let him who shall touch it beware."

After spending some three months in receiving the homage of Italy he left Eugene Beauharnais there as Viceroy and hurried back to Paris. There were signs that the Third Coalition was being formed, and at the same time his plans for the invasion of England were coming to a head.

CHAPTER XII

The Straits of Dover

The projected invasion of England never got beyond the stage of "previous preparation," though the naval part of it was full of manœuvre. But the preparations were on so vast a scale that they demand a short notice, if only as proofs of Napoleon's powers of organisation. Extending over two years, they certainly observed the maxim to "study all the details." In the matter of finance the project cost France practically nothing. It was ever Napoleon's idea to make war pay for itself, and when war was successful it left him with a credit balance, but as a rule it had to start with some sort of overdraft. Here, however, he paid his way, or, rather, made other people pay it for him. He compelled Spain to pay him a subsidy of 72,000,000 francs a year, and collected other subscriptions from Italy and Holland; he had forced Spain in 1800 to hand over to him the Colony of Louisiana, but, judging rightly that he would not be able to keep it, he proceeded to sell it to the United States for 80,000,000 francs. It would be, of course, impossible to estimate his total expenditure, but he asked for no vote on account, and only made a small increase in the taxation; there was no rise in prices. During the same period England, by more honest methods, increased her National Debt by millions, and wheat had risen from fifty-seven shillings a quarter in December 1802 to eighty-six shillings in 1804.

LAND FORCES.—Napoleon planned to subjugate Great Britain by land forces, the naval part of the operations being confined to putting the troops in safety across the

Channel. An army of 130,000 was to be ferried over in flat-bottomed boats, which could be run on to the beach and required no harbours or quays. The landing was to be made between Dover and Hastings, after which an immediate advance on London would finish the whole operation. The main body of his army was concentrated in huge camps, chiefly at Boulogne, and extending back to Arras. A wing of about 30,000 was placed in Brest, to threaten a move on Ireland; another wing was at Utrecht.

Napoleon paid many visits to the camps, and, besides the usual drills and parades, the troops were practised in embarking and disembarking; he calculated that the whole army could be got afloat in two hours, and be across the Channel in eight hours more. Six thousand horses were to be taken, but most of the Cavalry took only saddles and bridles, for the horses they were going to seize in Kent.

At first England regarded the prospect with calm, but it must be admitted that this gave way to real alarm, and when Pitt came back to power in May 1804 preparations were pushed forward on a large scale. The Regulars and Militia amounted to 180,000 and the Volunteers to 400,000, but the latter were rather a quaint force, many of them armed with pikes. Martello towers were completed round the coast from Harwich to Pevensey Bay. A scheme drawn up by General Dundas provided for the removal of all provisions, stores, animals, and fodder from the threatened counties, and the Volunteers would have been useful in carrying this out. The scheme contemplated quite calmly the abandonment of London if necessary, and arranged for the royal family and public treasure to be removed to Worcester. It is interesting to note that this scheme was the basis of the one which was afterwards put into force in Russia.

It is generally assumed, especially by foreign authors, that if Napoleon had got safely across he would have taken London without difficulty, and the campaign would have

been over. That must ever remain a matter of opinion. But London was not so vital to the country as it is at the present date, when it is the centre of the railway system and has the biggest commercial docks in the world. Napoleon was inclined to exaggerate the importance of capitals and underrate the resisting power of nations; he thought that by capturing Cairo, Vienna, Berlin, Moscow, he would break the heart of the nation concerned. He was mistaken. England certainly owes it to her Navy alone that Napoleon never crossed the Straits, but perhaps the Navy did its work only too well; if it had allowed the French to land, and then fought a second Battle of the Nile in the Straits of Dover, Napoleon might have found his Moscow in Kent, and Europe might have been saved twelve years of war!

NAVAL PREPARATIONS.—At first it would appear that reliance was based on the flotilla of flat-bottomed boats getting over by surprise. "Eight hours of darkness which would favour us would decide the fate of the universe" —such was Napoleon's idea, and it was not till later that he took the navies into serious consideration. There were to be a couple of thousand boats, to carry 60 to 100 men apiece; they were about 60 feet long, and only drew from 3 to 4 feet of water; they had sails, but could also be propelled by oars; each carried one or two guns. Napoleon thought that their numbers and their guns would protect them from the British cruisers, especially during a calm, when the latter could not manœuvre. In their coasting trips the boats sometimes defended themselves by getting into shoal water under protection of the shore batteries. The British admirals thoroughly despised such tubs, and a report describes one that was captured. She could not steer, her guns could be only fired fore and aft, and the crew was too seasick even to do this—"in fact, these vessels are to my mind completely contemptible and ridiculous."

The French admirals seem to have shared the opinion of their "opposite numbers"; they tried to give Napoleon some elementary instruction about winds, tides, and fogs. Unlike Canute, he seems to have thought that it only wanted a little determination to bend the forces of nature to his will; perhaps in some vaguely prophetic way he felt that mankind, by brain power and invention, would eventually be able to defy the winds, and drive a huge steamer straight into the teeth of a gale. He chafed at the incompetence of technical knowledge which could not put his army across a "dirty ditch." By degrees, however, his admirals convinced him that the flotilla must be protected by a fleet, and in July, 1804, he got as far as considering naval operations. He had not been neglecting them altogether, and had hurried on building in every dockyard from Antwerp to Toulon; he made new quays at such places as Boulogne and Cherbourg, and raised forts all along the coast to shelter the boats as they crawled round to concentrate near Boulogne. But, though he could count up many ships of the line, they were all safe in port—and could not get out. With sound strategy, the British First Sea Lord, St. Vincent, determined that, instead of waiting to be attacked, the Navy should blockade the French ships in their own harbours and prevent any concentration of the enemy's fleet. For two years the flags of Cornwallis, Nelson, Collingwood, and other immortals kept watch in fair weather and foul. The main fleets of the French at Brest, Rochefort (half-way down the Bay of Biscay), Ferrol (at the North-west corner of Spain), Cadiz, and Toulon, never succeeded in concentrating sufficient force to risk a battle.

In December '04 Spain declared war on England. That unhappy country had been for some time dominated by Napoleon; he demanded subsidies, and sent his ships to shelter and refit in Spanish ports. The British Government protested, pointing out that Spain, by succouring and comforting His Majesty's enemies, was constituting a

"just cause of war." Finding this of no avail, the Admiralty sent a small squadron to intercept the Spanish ships which were bringing from Peru the treasure that would be passed on to Napoleon. As this occurred before war was proclaimed Pitt has been abused, especially by English Whigs, but it does not appear that French or even Spanish authors have tried to make much of the incident. Holland Rose thinks that Pitt and his Admiralty did not foresee a fight, and expected the Spanish ships to surrender at once; they would then have been useful hostages while diplomacy did some more arguing. But the Spaniards put up a gallant fight, and one of their ships blew up before the others struck.

Apart from any moral point of view, it is doubtful whether Pitt was wise to run any risk of a rupture with Spain at that time; perhaps it was bound to come, and we must trust that his inside knowledge justified him in putting an end to a very one-sided neutrality, and having open war. It appeared to suit Napoleon. The Spanish ports and dockyards were now entirely at his disposal, and he relinquished the subsidy on condition that Spain should provide from twenty-five to twenty-nine ships of the line. On his side, he undertook to guarantee the integrity of the possessions of his Spanish Majesty. Five years later he had rewarded this ally of his by dethroning him and installing Joseph Bonaparte at Madrid!

The addition of the Spanish ships brought up Napoleon's fleets to something like equality with the British Navy—on paper—and he formed a fresh plan. Efforts were made to distract the blockading fleets by making threats against British commerce, and especially by making Nelson believe that Egypt was again the object. The French fleets were to assemble in the West Indies, and then the combined armada was to sail for Boulogne, where they were to arrive between June 10th and July 10th, 1805. The Toulon and Cadiz fleets, under Villeneuve, were the only ones that

slipped past the blockades and reached the West Indies. Nelson went in pursuit and failed to find them, but after a heart-breaking search he divined that Villeneuve had sailed again for France, so he followed, sending a fast ship ahead with the news. In an *English newspaper* Napoleon read on July 20th that his fleet was on its way back. He hoped that Villeneuve would be strong enough to raise the blockades of Ferrol and Brest, and so to complete a concentration of some forty ships, which would be big enough to come on up-channel. But orders went wrong, and, though he got the Ferrol fleet out, instead of steering for Boulogne, Villeneuve turned South on Aug. 15th and cast his anchors in Cadiz.

Meanwhile Napoleon was spending a month of torture at Boulogne, and one can imagine how the strain of waiting must have racked his impatience. Through the haze he could catch a gleam of white cliffs of Albion; from his own cliffs came the flash of sabre and bayonet glittering under the August sun; between them Neptune had spread a strip of blue, over which the hateful White Ensign kept watch and ward. If only Villeneuve would come! But there was never a sign of him.

THE TURN EASTWARD.—Villeneuve's decision to go to Cadiz was the turning-point of the operations. Napoleon could wait no longer for his fleet to make another attempt; but if one scheme broke down the opportunist was always ready with a second, so, when on Aug. 23rd he got definite news that Villeneuve had failed him, he gave way to one moment of fury, and then sat down to issue fresh orders. In two days the Grand Army was on the march towards the Rhine.

There is no doubt that for some months Napoleon had been preparing this alternative.

The execution of D'Enghien had aroused furious indignation in Russia and Austria, and a Third Coalition was taking

shape. In June Napoleon annexed Genoa, and this was another sign that he had no respect for treaties. It is possible that he did it on purpose to precipitate matters; he was afraid that failure at Boulogne would cover him with ridicule, and he wanted an excuse to turn elsewhere. "The new Coalition came just at the right moment to get him out of an annoying situation." Such was the opinion of his own officers.

The question is often asked whether Napoleon ever intended an invasion at all—was it not a pretence, a threat, to divert attention from his real object, which was Vienna? The celebrated American author, Captain Mahan, answers, "Assuredly he did mean invasion." It is true that such a pretence would have been quite in accordance with Napoleon's genius, and worthy of it; he had pretended to be looking at England in '98 when his eyes were on Egypt; the two years which he spent in drilling his Grand Army were a fine preparation for the conquest of Europe. But his naval preparations were on too big a scale to be mere bluff; the youth who had been brought up on £60 a year always liked to have value for his money, and the works on dockyards, forts, and moles must have cost millions. Still more weighty evidence is to be found in the orders he issued and the fury he exhibited when he found that Villeneuve had failed him: "What a Navy! What an admiral! What sacrifices for nothing! My hopes are frustrated!" Those words ring much more true than his claim, when trying to justify the expenditure on the flotilla, that "he had to find some pretext to collect an army."

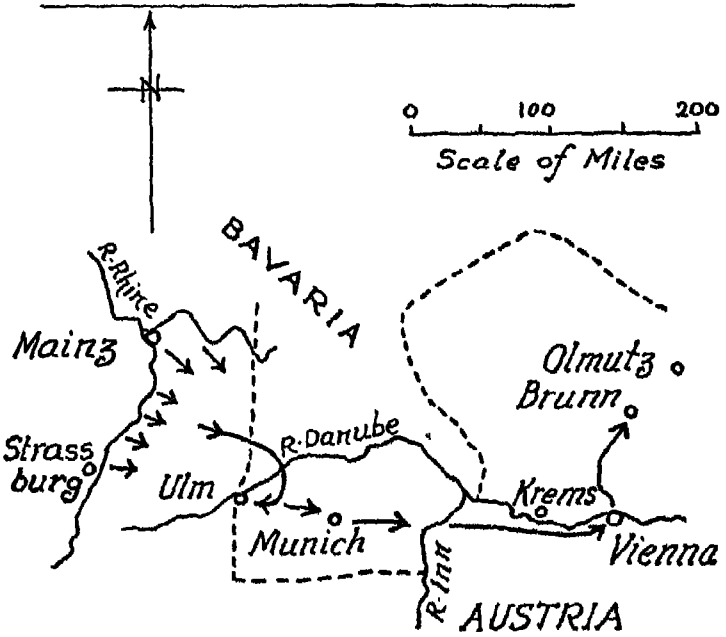
A still more convincing argument can be supplied by considering the strategical situation. Napoleon always tried to divide his enemies and defeat them in detail; he knew that he would be opposed by the Russians and Austrians, and that the former would take a long time to come into the field (Moscow to Vienna, 1,000 miles); his own army was quite ready in May, and the march to Vienna

(800 miles) could be done in three months ; by starting at the beginning of June he could reach Vienna by the end of August, long before the Russians could arrive, and would therefore be able to deal with the Austrians first ; a start in June would also give him five months of good weather before the winter set in. Why, then, did he delay till the end of August ? The answer is that he was waiting to see whether Villeneuve would arrive to give him a chance against England ; if he had never any intention of crossing the Channel he would certainly have begun his next operations at least three months earlier.

Finally, there is little doubt that England was the enemy for whose destruction he longed, and when he found he could not cross the ditch he turned eastward to cross the continent of Europe, *still on his way to England.*

What chance had the invasion of success ? The British Admiralty replied " None." The British Government thought : " We do not know, but it will do the nation no harm to wake it up ; we want men and ships and money ; we want the Whigs to stop talking." It is amusing to note that after Trafalgar, when all danger was over, Pitt was accused of having engineered a scare. That really admirable judge, Captain Mahan, who has studied the question so deeply, says : " To a purely speculative question involving so many elements it would be folly to reply with a positive assertion. . . . The probabilities favoured Great Britain ; there remained however to Napoleon enough chance to forbid saying that his enterprise was hopeless."

FRENCH ADVANCE TO ULM AND AUSTERLITZ



Started from Boulogne	Aug 27
Arrived Rhine	Sept 24. 300 miles
Capitulation of Ulm	Oct 21. 100 "
Arrived Vienna	Nov 13. 300 "
Arrived Brunn	Nov 19. 100 "
Battle of Austerlitz	(Dec. 2.)

Total 85 days 800 miles
Probable distance about 1000 miles

CHAPTER XIII

AUSTERLITZ

THIRD COALITION.—Napoleon always declared that the Third Coalition was brought about by English gold, and that Austria and Russia were simply the hired mercenaries of Pitt. He took care to spread this view in France by means of official statements and gross caricatures. But there were other factors. The young and romantic Tsar Alexander had been horrified by the execution of D'Enghien, and put his Court into mourning. The assumption of Imperial dignity by the Corsican was an affront to the Imperial Houses of Romanov and Hapsburg; the placing of the Crown of Italy on the usurper's head looked like the first stage of wider ambition; the annexation of Genoa broke a solemn treaty, and showed that no faith could be put in Napoleon's pledges.

Europe was bewildered and alarmed; Prussia hesitated; but in June '05 a convention was made between Austria and Russia, and plans were agreed upon for war. From the first, however, these plans show all the weakness to which a military alliance is prone. The Master of Strategy said truly that "the generals of Europe see too many things." The Austrians saw the rich plains of Northern Italy, and sent half their forces to retake them, but Italy is *not* on the road from Boulogne to Vienna. The Russians saw Malta in the distance and this induced them to send a contingent in that direction—"to help Naples." The distribution shows that nearly 400,000 men, which were to be put into the field, were split up into eight separate forces, and the campaign shows that not even one quarter of the full strength was ever assembled on one field of battle.

It must however be admitted that it is impossible to get at anything like exact numbers, either in this war or those

which follow. Von Wartenburg revels in figures, and has made a study of them; he is probably the most reliable authority, and has been roughly followed in this book. But when we learn that 219,000 at Boulogne dwindled down to 74,800 at Austerlitz, we get some idea of the wastage which is entailed by sickness, forced marches, desertion, and detachments on the Lines of Communication. The numbers, of course, were changing from day to day.

To some extent the dispersion of the Allies was difficult to avoid, for the Russians had a long way to come, but the concentration might have been better if the ordinary rules of strategy had been observed.

Napoleon, on the other hand, saw "only the main body of the enemy." He had about 250,000 at his disposal, and paid no attention at all to minor operations; 50,000 under Massena were kept in Italy, and the whole of the rest formed one concentrated mass for attack. He did not yet know where the enemy's main body would be found, but he thought he would meet it somewhere if he marched on Vienna.

The Austrians not only dispersed their forces, but allowed the politicians to dictate to the generals. The army which was kept in the valley of the Danube was nominally commanded by the Archduke Ferdinand, but was really handled by General Mack. If he had waited for the 1st Russian Army the combined forces might have drawn further reinforcements from Italy and the Tyrol, and shown a strong front to the invaders. The convention had arranged that the 1st Russian Army should arrive on the river Inn by Oct. 20th, but political reasons urged Mack to advance to Ulm, in order to force the hand of Bavaria. The States of Southern Germany were nominally under the Emperor Francis, but the Electors of Bavaria, Wurtemburg, and Baden were very independent of Vienna, and had not joined the Coalition. The Bavarians had an army of 20,000, and it was hoped that Mack might induce them to join him;

if they refused he could regard Bavaria as a hostile country, and live free at its expense; he would leave very little for the French to live on. As it turned out, the Bavarian army slipped away to the North and joined Napoleon. The idea of Mack's advance was not unsound, if only he had taken care to come back in time to make sure of joining the Russians.

THE ADVANCE.—Napoleon's previous preparations had been going on steadily for two years, and gave him a magnificent army, well organised, well drilled, and well officered, so he could go straight into the Phase of Manœuvre. The unwise distribution of the Allies gave him another of those opportunities in which he delighted, and his strategical plan was simple and elastic, as, indeed, all his plans were.

He expected that the Austrians would be on the Inn or in Bavaria, so he decided to start his march well to the North of the Danube, hoping to get behind the Austrian army, cut it off from Vienna, and defeat it before the Russians arrived. In this move the strategy was much the same as at Marengo. There he had dropped out of the clouds of the Alps and taken Melas in rear; here there were no mountains to screen his manœuvre, but he effected surprise by the rapidity of his army. He ran risks, as he had done before, but the reward of success was so great that the risks were quite justifiable.

The first stage of the march was to the Rhine, which river was reached about Sep. 25th, just a month after leaving Boulogne. The various corps crossed as shown in the sketch, and it will be seen that so far they had been kept extended—"disperse to feed." But on approaching the enemy the line was drawn in. Murat's Cavalry were sent to make demonstrations in the Black Forest, so as to give the impression that the whole army would come that way. On Sep. 20th a report was received that Mack was approaching Ulm. This was good news, and if only Mack would stay there Napoleon saw his way to a second Marengo.

Meanwhile Mack believed that he was quite safe, and was fattening his army in Bavaria, on the South bank of the Danube. It was not till Oct. 5th that he got a real idea of his danger, and then he ordered a concentration at Ulm, but it was already too late, for on Oct. 7th the French were crossing the river in his rear, and the barricade was being established as at Marengo. It will be remembered that in Italy Napoleon made a barricade longer than was justified by his strength, with the result that Melas very nearly broke through. On the present occasion, however, he could afford to spread out, as he had on the spot more than twice the force of the Austrians (160,000 to 70,000). When Mack found the enemy right between him and Vienna he thought of crossing to the North bank and making a dash for Bohemia. It might perhaps have been done, for the French were weakest on the North of the river, but only a half-hearted attempt was made to carry the idea out. Mack himself, with 30,000 men, never left Ulm, and surrendered without fighting on Oct. 21st. A column which moved across the river was met by the French and cut off.

There is considerable diversity given in the number of prisoners taken; in Ulm about 30,000 and in previous skirmishes perhaps 10,000. The only body that escaped numbered 2,000 horsemen under the Archduke Ferdinand. The balance of Mack's 70,000 are not accounted for, but probably most of them straggled into the Tyrol or Bohemia. At all events, as an army they ceased to exist, and less than two months after leaving Boulogne Napoleon was able to say, "I have destroyed the Austrian army by sheer marching." Note that "I" did it.

The surrender at Ulm completes the first scene of the war. Some historians prefer to treat Ulm and Austerlitz as two separate campaigns, and it is true that the operation of Ulm was complete in itself, and entirely disposed of one army; but the error of the Austrians can only be appreciated when it is remembered that Kutusov's Russians

arrived on the Inn on the very day that Mack surrendered, so that if the latter had not allowed himself to be caught the Allies would have effected at least one combination.

Though delighted with his success, Napoleon did not waste time in celebrations. His next object was to attack the Allies who were now on the Inn before the Austrian force could be recalled from Italy or the 2nd Russian Army could join up. He expected that Vienna would not be abandoned without a fight, so he set his whole army in motion; he was confined, however, to two roads, as there were no others fit for troops, and even these two were bad on account of the weather, which had been very wet all through October. One corps only, a new one which had been formed under Mortier, was moved along the North bank—a detachment, against Napoleon's own principles, and it was the one mistake of the campaign. Kutusov had collected about 30,000 Russians and 22,000 Austrians on the Inn, but when he heard of Mack's fate he decided that before accepting battle he must join the 2nd Russian Army, which he expected to meet at Olmutz; Vienna could not be defended. He therefore fell back, and crossed the Danube to Krems, where he found Mortier's detachment. Falling on it with his whole force, he cut it to pieces and scored a distinct success, but in his manœuvres his troops got dispersed, and the success cost him some days which he could ill afford.

Vienna was left open, and Napoleon entered on Nov. 13th, completing the march from Boulogne—about 800 miles—in eighty days, at least ten of which were spent in circling about Ulm.

The occupation of Vienna was a real triumph. The new Emperor of the French entered the capital of the oldest Empire in Europe, and established his headquarters in the castle of Schonbrunn, the palace of the Hapsburgs. But though this marks the completion of the second scene, it was by no means the final one; the main body of the enemy

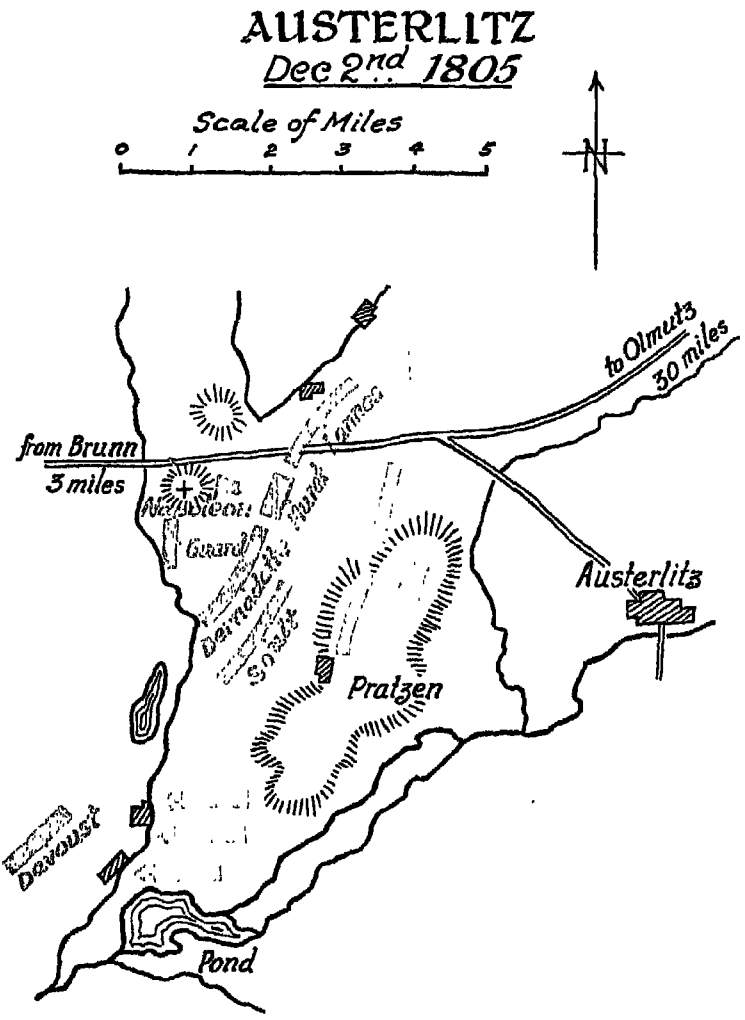
was still in the field, undefeated and formidable, and therefore there was no rest for the weary French columns.

Vienna lies on the South bank of the main stream of the Danube, over which there was one big bridge, which the Austrians intended to blow up, and all preparations for the demolition had been made. Murat and Lannes went forward alone, and found an Austrian general, whom they persuaded to believe that a truce had been arranged. The Austrian accepted their word for this, and while the conversation was proceeding amicably French troops stole up, took possession of the bridge, and destroyed all the preparations for blowing it up.

This gave Napoleon a passage over the river, and he rushed troops forward, hoping to get round Kutusov and cut him off from Olmutz.

On Nov. 15th an amusing incident occurred. Murat was leading the way with his Cavalry when he came upon some Russian troops, and he thought that the whole Russian force was close in front of him. As his Cavalry had outmarched the Infantry he thought he was isolated in a position of danger, so he repeated the device by which he had gained possession of the bridge, and talked of a truce.

The wily Kutusov, however, was equal to the occasion; he had only a very small force on the spot, and his one desire was to delay the French advance, so he immediately agreed to parley, and pretended to believe that a truce was really being considered; he implied that he was authorised to make negotiations. So an armistice was arranged—Murat to halt, and Kutusov to leave Austria as soon as Napoleon had confirmed the terms. Murat sent a report to Napoleon, who, grasping the situation much better, flew into a rage, and ordered an immediate attack. Kutusov had, however, gained thirty-six hours, and was able to shake off the French, who had, by their rapidity, almost cut off his retreat. He pushed on to Olmutz, where he found the 2nd Army.


AUSTERLITZ
Dec 2nd 1805
Scale of Miles
0 1 2 3 4 5
N
to Olmutz
30 miles
from Brunn
3 miles
Guard
Austerlitz
Pratzen
Pond

Napoleon, who had hastened to the front, was bitterly disappointed, and said to Murat, " You have made me lose the fruits of the whole campaign "—and this appeared to be true. The balance of numbers was now completely altered, and left Napoleon in a serious position. As he advanced he had left detachments in Munich, Vienna, and elsewhere, and with sickness and desertion his army was growing smaller day by day. He arrived at Brunn with only 50,000, and had 25,000 more within four days' call. The Allies, on the contrary, were picking up detachments and their own stragglers as they fell back, and Kutusov collected at Olmutz about 50,000 Russians and 40,000 Austrians, 90,000 in all. The Austrians from Italy had come back and were East of Vienna, about 150 miles away. On the North the Prussians had mobilised, and, though it was by no means clear what they intended to do, they were a threat to Napoleon's rear if he had a reverse.

The experienced Kutusov wanted to avoid battle and march to the South-east to join the other Austrians; such a move would have made Napoleon's position still more serious. But in the camp of the Allies confidence ran high; the Emperors Alexander and Francis had joined the army, each bringing in his train many gallant young nobles whose enthusiasm overruled the prudence of age; and it was decided to give battle. The plan was to work round to the South and attack the French right flank, thus cutting them off from Vienna and their communications.

With joy Napoleon watched this plan develop. He had pushed forward from Brunn as far as the village of Austerlitz, but now he drew back a little, partly to choose his ground and partly to collect his troops, who were still coming up from Vienna. If his opponents sent a force round to the South they would thereby weaken their centre, and give him an opportunity to deal a blow from an interior position with a concentrated mass. This, in fact, was the manœuvre of Austerlitz, the mighty conflict wherein three Empires met.

On Dec. 1st the two forces were drawn up on heights facing each other, with a valley between them. It was clear that the decisive battle would take place next day. It will be seen from the sketch that Napoleon kept his whole force closely massed on a front of three miles, with only a small detaining force thrown out on his right; the Allies, by sending three columns to the South, extended their line to just double that frontage, and were weakest on the plateau of Pratzen, which was the key of the whole position.

THE BATTLE.—Dec. 2nd was the anniversary of Napoleon's coronation.

When the yellow "sun of Austerlitz" broke through the morning fog it showed long, grey columns moving down to the South, while the white coats of the Austrians were still to the North. In the centre stood the heights of Pratzen, from which the smoke of bivouac fires rose straight into the frosty air, like a forest of giant poplars.

Napoleon stood among the Marshals of France on the high ground opposite, and saw that his enemy must indeed have made the fatal mistake which he had foreseen. Though he knew the danger to the little force on his right wing, he would send it no reinforcements; every man must be kept for "superior forces at the decisive point." He turned to Soult. "How long will it take you to reach the heights of Pratzen?" "Less than twenty minutes." "In that case we will wait another quarter of an hour."

When the order was given Soult led his corps to storm the heights. Kutusov, who was there, recognised the danger, and called on all the reserves within reach to make a fight for the plateau. Gallantly the Russians responded to his appeal, and for two hours the struggle was fierce, but by noon the weight of numbers turned the balance, and the heights were in possession of the French.

Farther North the battle was more even, and one of the greatest cavalry combats in history was fought out between Pratzen and the Brunn road. The French Cavalry, under

Murat and Kellermann, supported by the Cavalry of the Guard under Bessieres, engaged the Imperial Guard of Russia, and after a furious *melée*, which surged backwards and forwards, the Allies were forced to draw off towards Austerlitz. By noon all the Austrians and Russians were forced back to the Littawa stream.

Once victory was assured in the centre Napoleon could send help to his right wing, which had been sorely pressed all morning; the Russian columns had fought their way across the Goldbach stream, and it needed all the grim valour of Davoust and his men to hold out till succour could reach them. But now Soult was turned southward from the plateau and came down on the Russian rear, which, caught between two fires, was thrown into confusion and annihilated.

Legend has painted a dramatic picture of thousands of fugitives trying to escape across the frozen ponds, while French cannon-balls crashed into the ice and sent them to a watery grave. The ever-delightful Baron Marbot gives a graphic account of how he plunged into the icy water and rescued a wounded Russian sergeant. But Holland Rose, who is more reliable than legend or Marbot, has thrown the cold light of truth on the scene, and shows that only two or three men and one or two hundred horses were drowned.

The Battle of Austerlitz was decisive and ended the war. The Allies lost more than one-third of their total numbers, over 30,000 men in killed, wounded, and prisoners; also all their guns, about 150. The French casualties were about 7,000. The Austrian Emperor sued for peace, while the Russians crawled away northwards and tacitly agreed to the break-up of the Third Coalition.

Napoleon's strategy had been admirable as far as Ulm. After that he was placed in a dangerous situation, but retrieved it brilliantly by his tactics at Austerlitz, which was the finest example of all his efforts on the actual field of battle. Marshal Foch, in his *Principes des Guerres*,

points out that it was not only the material weight of superior forces in the centre which decided the issue, but the moral effect of the surprise, which upset the plan of the Allied generals, and left them at the mercy of the French.

The Treaty of Pressburg, signed between Napoleon and the Emperor Francis, was very hard upon Austria. Napoleon was recognised as King of Italy, and the Austrians ceded to him all their rich possessions in that country, including Venice; they also handed over the Tyrol to Bavaria. The Electorates of Bavaria, Wurtemburg, and Baden were promoted to the rank of Kingdoms, a cheap means of rewarding the Electors for their servility to France in the late campaign and for the future aid which was demanded of them later; but as their territories were "guaranteed" by Napoleon, they may be said to have become Kings and vassals with the same stroke of the pen.

Talleyrand had urged Napoleon to show clemency; he thought that if the Hapsburgs were not humiliated too far they might become, if not friends, at least peaceful neighbours. But all the arguments of the far-seeing diplomat failed to move Napoleon, in whose pocket lay a message which he had received before entering Vienna—*Trafalgar—the British Navy*—fought on the very day on which Mack had surrendered at Ulm. Not even the triumph of Austerlitz could cheer Napoleon out of his harsh mood; he must gloat over the humiliation of someone else. The Hapsburgs signed the peace but did not forget.

Legend has given to François I fame for the shortest despatch in history. After the disastrous battle of Pavia he wrote to his mother, "Madame, all is lost save honour." Fame of a sort seems due to Napoleon's official announcement of Trafalgar: "Storms caused us to lose some ships of the line after a fight imprudently engaged" (speech to the Legislature, March 2nd, 1806). "Imprudently engaged" is correct.

CHAPTER XIV

JENA

1806.—Pitt had for some time been in bad health, and, though the news of Trafalgar rallied him for a few weeks, Austerlitz broke his heart, and he died in January. A Coalition Ministry was formed of Tories and Whigs under Lord Grenville, with Fox as Foreign Minister; as Trafalgar had finally removed all danger of invasion, and Napoleon had won his triumph at Austerlitz, there was quite a possibility that peace might be reached with honour on both sides if the Emperor showed any signs of goodwill and honest intent; especially was this the case now that Fox was at the Foreign Office. This brilliant orator had always protested against the war, and by his former speeches and traditions he was bound to make an effort for peace; but, like Pitt, who had also hated war, he found that Napoleon would show no mercy to the unfortunate small States on the Continent. Fox could offer sacrifices on behalf of England for the sake of peace, but he could not be a traitor to his allies, and when he found that all appeals on behalf of Naples were rejected, he sadly came to the conclusion that Napoleon was false to the "liberty of the Revolution" which had once seemed so attractive, and that the autocratic Emperor was bent on conquest. Not long before his death Fox said, "It is not so much the value of the point in dispute as the manner in which the French fly from their word that disheartens me. It is not Naples, but the shuffling, insincere way in which they act, that shows me they are playing a false game; and in that case it would be very imprudent to make any concessions, which by any

possibility could be thought inconsistent with our honour, or could furnish our allies with a plausible pretence for suspecting, reproaching, or deserting us." Fox died on September 13th, and with him all hopes of coming to an understanding with France; the war party was left supreme in England.

The year after Austerlitz is the most inexplicable period in Napoleon's career. His skill as a soldier and cunning as a diplomat make us hesitate to call him mad; but it is hard to believe that this was the same man as the First Consul who had calmly restored order, or the Statesman whose power was built up on his insight into the traditions and desires and character of a nation. In 1806 he seemed determined to root up every foundation of nationality, tradition, geography, and replace them with his own whims.

He sent his brother Joseph to be King of Naples and Louis to be King of Holland; he promoted his Marshals to be Dukes and Princes, not of France, but of rich provinces in Italy; he talked of the partition of Turkey and of Poland, and the fate of Hanover and Rhineland; handing over populations of millions without the least regard for their wishes or traditions; disposing of a State and its people as a farmer might dispose of a field and a flock of sheep. He was no less tyrannical in his own Court and family; though he could crack jokes with a grenadier in the ranks, no one of his own household dared to address him, not even his own brother-in-law, Murat, the fearless *sabreur*, who was soon to become a King himself.

Was all this nothing but ambition? Ambition was certainly there, but surely peace at this moment would have offered a prospect dazzling enough to satisfy the wildest dreams; he would be acknowledged by all the Powers of Europe as Emperor of a hereditary realm; the questions of Italy and Holland had been settled with Austria, and would not be reopened; from England he would recover several colonies; a renewal of sea-borne trade would open

all the world to his ships. If he rejected such a prospect from motives of ambition, surely that ambition must be blind.

Was his hatred of England so deep that he must avenge himself on all Europe? I have suggested hatred as the influence which started him on his new course, but surely the recognition of the Emperor of the French by the Court of St. James would have been in itself sufficient triumph to heal wounded vanity.

Was it a passion for gambling? It is not the stakes which attract a born gambler so much as the thrills the game affords and the skill it demands. Did Napoleon gamble in war and diplomacy for sheer love of the game, loving it all the more when the stakes were high and the odds against him? Did he double his stake, winning or losing, for the excitement of pitting himself against Dame Fortune? This would account for his reckless: ness—your true gambler is ever reckless, and the appetite grows.

Perhaps the demons of Ambition, Vengeance, and Gambling were all there, driving him on; he had won against Austria and Russia; it was now the turn of Prussia.

PRUSSIA.—Prussia has hitherto been left out of the narrative, because its part in the plot is easier to understand when regarded as a whole.

King Frederick William III, who succeeded to the throne in 1795, has been severely criticised for his vacillation and want of foresight; he has been compared to Louis XVI, blameless in his private life, meaning well to his people, but weak and hesitating when the situation demanded bold decision. His wife, the beautiful Queen Louise, has also been compared to Marie Antoinette; though not so frivolous, she was the fairest ornament of the Court. It is easy to see by the light of after events that the King might have saved his country from defeat and humiliation if he had

joined the Third Coalition, and brought his army to co-operate with Austria and Russia, but the situation, as it presented itself to him at the time, was not so simple. The main forces which were urging him in opposite directions may be summed up as follows:

1. The outrages of the Revolution had filled him with horror and made him look on the French as enemies.

2. Napoleon's aggressive policy and assumption of Imperial rank added to his alarm.

3. The arrest of D'Enghien, and other violation of German territory, were deliberate insults.

These three factors urged him to join the Coalition.

4. The old jealousy between Frederick the Great and Marie Therèse over supremacy in Germany left distrust between Berlin and Vienna which had never been dispelled.

5. The partitions of Poland (it had been partitioned three times between Russia, Prussia, and Austria) was the stumbling-block in the way of an alliance with Russia.

6. The desire to annex Hanover, and thus gain an outlet for commerce on the North Sea, was the stumbling-block between him and England.

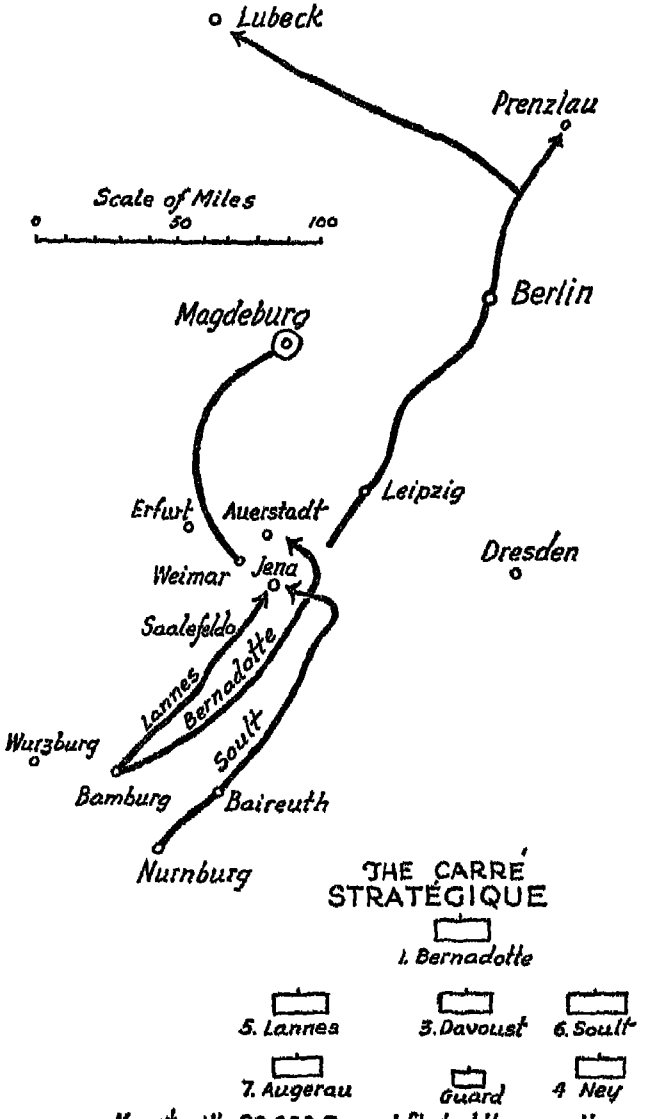
So, before any definite alliance could be made, guarantees and promises of all kinds were demanded, and in spite of long negotiations no agreement had ever been reached which would satisfy all these four Powers. Add to this that his Court was torn into two parties—one, headed by the Queen and the officers of the army, urging him to uphold the honour of the Hohenzollerns, cost what it might; the other urging him to spare his country from invasion and to add to its prosperity by keeping on the side of the invincible Master of the Land.

Napoleon knew very well the troubles of the King, and used them cunningly for his own ends all through 1805. He had no illusions about friendship or common interest with Berlin, but he wanted, as always, to keep his enemies

divided; Frederick William must at least be kept neutral while French armies were in Austria. Hanover was used as a bribe, and gave the Gallophile Prussians a strong argument —France might give them Hanover; England, of course, never would. When Napoleon started from Boulogne he withdrew the troops he had in Hanover to join his Grand Army, and allowed Prussian troops to go in, flattering Frederick William that Hanover was his for ever. Once Austerlitz was over Napoleon cared no more whether Prussia were neutral or not, so in his negotiations with Fox he secretely offered to restore Hanover to England. Whether this offer was genuine is doubtful; he probably meant to have Hanover for himself; but in the meantime the offer became known in Berlin, and made a bone of contention between England and Prussia which effectually stopped any coalition on that side; Fox denounced Prussia as "a compound of everything that is contemptible in servility with everything that is odious in rapacity." As Frederick William had refused to go to the help of Austria he could have no hope that the Hapsburgs, in their present crushed condition, would draw the sword afresh to save the Hohenzollerns; he was therefore alone, and could be dealt with at leisure.

It is impossible to say when Napoleon made his decision to conquer Prussia—perhaps even before he left Boulogne he had promised himself that pleasure, and early in 1806 he was certainly thinking of it. Instead of taking his Grand Army back to France, he put it into billets in Southern Germany, thus maintaining it free of expense and keeping it in a handy position. To prevent any unpleasantness which this might entail in Bavaria, Wurtemberg, and, Baden, he not only promoted their Electors to be Kings but cemented the friendship with family alliances; he ordered Eugene Beauharnais to marry a Bavarian Princess (a marriage which turned out very well); Jerome Bonaparte was ordered to divorce his American wife and marry a

FRENCH MARCHES 1806



Princess of Wurtemburg; while a Prince of Baden was ordered to marry a niece of Josephine.

A mass of small States were formed into the Confederation of the Rhine, under the " protection " of France, thereby completely breaking up the German race.

Berlin could no longer have any doubt about Napoleon's intentions; his double-dealing over Hanover, the Confederation of the Rhine, and the Grand Army in Southern Germany silenced the partisans of France, while the Queen, her friends, and indeed the whole nation, clamoured for war.

It is easy to see now that Prussia had no chance, but the fame of Frederick the Great had inspired the country with faith in its army, and the officers were eager to test their well-drilled troops against the French. But the latter had been learning war on battlefields, while the Prussians had encrusted themselves in traditions of the Seven Years' War, and, indeed, their senior officers were relics of those days. The army was a military caste, apart from the nation; in the ranks were many foreign mercenaries, who had to be kept in hand by the harshest discipline; the drill and manœuvres were exact, but slow; the supply arrangements were disgraceful. The Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Brunswick, over seventy years of age, was no general, and, though he had such fine subordinates as Blucher, Scharnhorst, and Bulow, there was no strategy in the plans. In September it was recognised that war was inevitable.

STRATEGY.—The previous preparations of Napoleon were complete, as in the Austerlitz campaign, and it was only necessary to put the corps in motion. By the end of September the Emperor had planned his opening move. Though information about the enemy's forces was very vague, he thought they would be somewhere round Erfurt, and therefore decided to concentrate his " offensive mass " between Bamberg and Baireuth; then, repeating the

manœuvre of Marengo and Ulm, he intended to keep round to the East of the Prussians and cut them off from Berlin and Dresden. His army was to march on three roads, forming a centre and two wings, well within touch of each other. One corps only, under Mortier, was left at Mainz; the other six corps and the Guard were formed in what has been called the "Carré Stratégique" (see the sketch). This formation enabled them to turn to the right or left if required, and to concentrate on any point in a couple of days. The corps had an average strength of 25,000 each, and with Murat's cavalry, 20,000, and 300 guns, the total numbers were about 200,000.

To oppose these the Prussians had 106,000 ready in the field, and a reserve corps at Magdeburg. They were joined by a Saxon division of 20,000, who were not very willing allies, and spent their time in complaining about the supplies, in which complaints they were quite justified. There were the strongest laws against the troops doing any requisitioning for themselves, and the Army Headquarters proposed to arrange the feeding. The poet Goethe, who had been made Commissary of Supplies at Weimar, seems to have been better at turning out verses than issuing rations, and as the other commissaries were equally helpless the whole army was nearly starved. It says a good deal for the discipline that there was very little looting. The rich district was left for the French to loot, which added very much to their mobility.

Endless councils of war were held to discuss plans, and at first it was decided to take the offensive and move on Wurzburg, but about October 4th this was changed, and a defensive attitude was adopted. The centre, under Brunswick himself, was about Erfurt, and the wings, under Prince Hohenlohe and General Ruchel, which had been stretched out very wide, were drawn closer in.

Napoleon had as yet very little news, but began his advance on October 6th. On the 9th Bernadotte met a

division of Prussians and drove them back. On the 10th Lannes had a more serious engagement at Saalfeld; Prince Louis Ferdinand, the gallant young nephew of the King, made a bold stand with one of Hohenlohe's divisions, which was only defeated after the Prince himself had been killed. These two engagements gave Napoleon the impression that the enemy was to the left of him, and on the 11th he decided to make a wheel in that direction. By the evening of the 13th the army was facing westwards, the left (Lannes and Augerau) near Jena, the right (Bernadotte and Davoust) near Naumburg, while Soult and Ney now became the centre.

The real positions of the Prussians on the evening of the 13th were as shown on the sketch, and their intention was to retire northwards next day.

The little country town of Jena lies on the West bank of the River Saale; on the North of it the slopes rise very steeply from the valley to the crest of the plateau known as the Landgrafenburg; to the North-west runs the road to Weimar, up a smaller valley called the Muhl Thal.

Prince Hohenlohe had evacuated Jena, as he did not want to be caught in the valley, with no road behind him by which he could join Brunswick; he therefore bivouacked on the plateau, about four miles North of the town. He no doubt thought that the slope of the Landgrafenburg was so impassable that no army could come that way, so he devoted his attention to the Muhl Thal, and with incredible carelessness allowed the advanced troops of Lannes to steal up to the crest and establish themselves.

Napoleon, who had not been expecting a battle so soon, got a report from Lannes which brought him at a gallop to Jena; he went up the height, and, seeing the bivouacs of Hohenlohe spread out in front of him, thought that the whole Prussian army was there. Frantic orders were sent in every direction to collect his forces, and the advantage

of the *carrè* formation is seen from the fact that all the corps arrived in Jena within twenty hours, except Bernadotte and Davoust, who had other orders. There was little rest for anyone on the eve of the battle.

MARBOT.—The irrepressible Marbot has, of course, a tale to tell. He began his evening by rescuing two young ladies in nightgowns from a party of drunken soldiers, received a blessing from the tearful parents, and made an appropriate reply. He wandered into the town, which was partially in flames, and we get a piteous description of the hapless inhabitants. Then comes the story of the priest and the secret pathway up the slope. The priest was a Saxon who hated the Prussians, and, as he believed they were responsible for burning the town, he decided to show Napoleon the only path which led to the crest, and it was entirely due to him that the French troops were able to get up there. The priest was afterwards rewarded by Napoleon, and lived happily till 1814, when, fearing the vegeance of the Prussians, he fled to Paris; when the Allies entered Paris they arrested him, and he went to prison for three years, after which he was liberated at the request of Louis XVIII, and returned to Paris.

Our Marbot is not altogether accurate. Napoleon did not arrive in Jena until 4 p.m., and the French scouts had been on the edge of the plateau some hours earlier, but it is very possible that the priest knew a better way up, and that his information was valuable; as at least 40,000 men and 25 guns were pushed up the slope in ten hours, it is clear that they could not all have gone by a single path. It is certain that Napoleon himself superintended the fatigue parties, who worked all night at improving the roadway.

JENA.—By daybreak on the 14th about 50,000 men were massed on the edge of the plateau, and the Prussians were quite unconscious of them. The situation was rather like that of Wolfe at Quebec, when he scaled the Heights)

Abraham by an unwatched pathway and surprised Montcalm by appearing on the plain at the top. A thick fog hid the dense column from the Prussian gunners, and enabled the French to steal forward and gain room in which to deploy. When the fog lifted and revealed them Hohenlohe decided to attack, but the French threw forward a cloud of skirmishers, who cleared the way for their columns, and, despite gallant efforts, the Prussians were forced back. Augerau came up on the left of Lannes by the Muhl Thal, and Soult came up by a ravine on the right, and by 10 a.m. the Prussians were defeated. Ruchel, who was coming to their aid from Weimar, did not arrive on the scene till 2 p.m., and he was then too late to retrieve the disaster. By 4 p.m. the whole force was flying in confusion.

In the evening Napoleon returned to Jena, convinced that he had crushed the enemy's main body; but, as a matter of fact, the main body had been fighting on quite another battlefield, fifteen miles to the north.

AUERSTADT.—Davoust had received orders on the 13th to march to Apolda, where Napoleon thought he would concentrate his whole force. Davoust's corps remained at Naumburg for the night, but, like a wise man, he sent a force up the valley of the Saale to seize a defile at Kosen. Brunswick's main body was at Auerstadt, and when he resumed his march on the morning of the 14th his cavalry, under the impetuous Blucher, came into contact with Davoust's advanced troops. The cavalry were thrown back, but Blucher brought up some infantry and attacked again; each side pushed up reinforcements, and the *affaire de rencontre* developed into a very serious battle. By noon the whole of Davoust's corps had been thrown into the fight, and was getting exhausted, while the Prussians still had 20,000 fresh troops in hand. At the critical moment, however, Brunswick himself was mortally wounded, and the commander who succeeded him, having heard exaggerated reports of the defeat at Jena, decided to keep

his reserve "to cover the retreat." Davoust was left the victor, and has been given the credit he deserves by all historians; Auerstadt was the finest independent action ever fought by any of the Marshals of France. Though Napoleon himself recognised its value in his private letters, and made his glorious Marshal the Prince of Auerstadt, he was careful in his official despatches to give the first place to the battle of Jena; and he nourished a little jealousy of Davoust to the end of his life.

BERNADOTTE.—While the twin battles of Jena and Auerstadt were being fought, Bernadotte sat between them and did nothing—for which he has been bitterly assailed. Napoleon is said to have contemplated a court-martial, but let him off on account of his relationship with Joseph Bonaparte (they had married the Clary sisters). The facts are that Davoust received at 4 a.m. a message from Berthier ordering him to Apolda, and adding, "If Bernadotte is with you, you can march together, but the Emperor hopes he will be at Dornburg." On this Bernadotte thought he was wanted at Dornburg, and marched thither, arriving at 11 a.m. No other orders reached him until the two battles were over, but he could hear the guns, and knew that Davoust was heavily engaged. The French military writer Bonnal is very severe on the *Affaire Bernadotte*, but I venture to differ from even so distinguished a writer. The blame should be thrown on Napoleon's system of *personal control*; he never let his Marshals know his plans, and did not want them to reason why, but to obey. Bernadotte had been at Austerlitz, and had seen this same corps of Davoust being hammered all morning by superior Russian forces without a man being sent to help; Napoleon wanted every man for a plan which was in his own head; he might very well have had some such plan at Jena, in which case he would have been furious with Bernadotte if the latter had gone off to help Davoust. If a Von Moltke had been commanding the army Bernadotte would have used his

own judgment, which was very good; but Napoleon's whole system was based on keeping reserves in hand for the *moment donné*, and any movement, except by his definite order, would have broken that system down. When Bernadotte turned against Napoleon in 1813, all the Bonapartists raked up the story of Jena, treachery, jealousy of Davoust, and so forth. Bernadotte was no traitor on this day, but perhaps the rift which it caused between him and the Emperor was the first thing that pushed him in the direction of the Swedish Throne.

COMMENTS.—Napoleon himself has been criticised by some people for leaving Davoust so much "in the air," and liable to defeat by superior Prussian forces, but Bonnal, in his *Manœuvre d'Iéna*, shows that even if Davoust's one corps had been defeated it would not have been fatal to the campaign; Napoleon was quite ready to lose one corps if the gain at the decisive point was adequate. In every way his strategy was admirable, though not so original in conception as Marengo or Ulm. The battle of Jena was lucky, and success was in a great part due to Hohenlohe's mistakes; he ought never to have allowed the French to gain the crest of the plateau; he ought to have retired to join Brunswick or Ruchel before accepting battle.

THE PURSUIT.—The rest of the campaign shows practically no fighting, but it is always quoted as a fine example of the "Strategical Pursuit." The Prussians got their men together after the battles and retired, but, instead of destroying the country, they issued strong orders "to spare the inhabitants," with the result that the French found plenty where their own troops had been starving. The surrenders of the Prussian troops and fortresses were disgraceful. On October 15th, 10,000 laid down their arms at Erfurt to Murat's cavalry. Bernadotte came on the Reserve Corps at Halle; it fled back to Magdeburg, and surrendered on November 8th. Hohenlohe, with 13,000, escaped as far as Prenzlau, but was there overtaken, and surrendered. Blucher made the best

effort, and got away as far as Lubeck, but capitulated there with 17,000 on November 7th. Strongly fortified towns opened their gates at the summons of a squadron of cavalry, and appeared to welcome the invaders; when they found they had to find supplies for a whole corps, and, instead of being paid, had themselves to pay a heavy fine in addition, the warmth of their welcome was damped.

The demands made by the victors were cruel, even for those days, and they treated the vanquished with deliberate brutality. Napoleon entered Berlin in triumph on October 27th; as he had always been a keen admirer of Frederick the Great, he made a "pilgrimage" to his tomb—and robbed it of the sword and belt of Prussia's hero, to be sent as a trophy to Paris.

CHAPTER XV

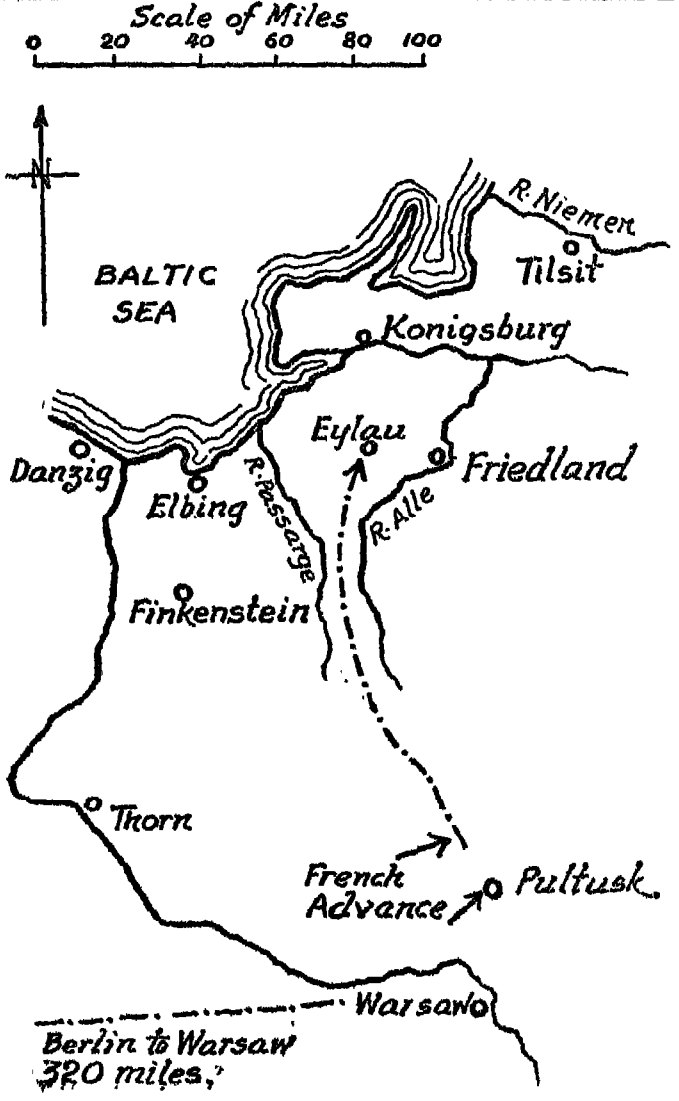
FRIEDLAND

CONTINENTAL SYSTEM.—The Kingdom of Prussia had been crushed in one month, and Napoleon began to consider how he could use this conquest against his chief enemy, England. It seemed that his sword would never be able to get within striking distance of the trident of the sea; threats and abuse only alienated the "humanitarian" section of the British, and did not frighten the others. He therefore decided to ruin this nation of shopkeepers by killing their commerce.

His "Continental System" was intended to shut out British goods in any form from the whole of Europe, and to prevent the English from getting the raw materials they wanted from the Continent. Napoleon already held all the ports on the coast of Europe from Venice to Holland, except those of Portugal. His recent success had added to these the ports of Northern Germany, where the trade had been very heavy. He thought that he might now put his System into effect, and the decree was promulgated in November '06; heavy penalties were attached for those who refused to conform.

It is useless to deny that the System injured our trade—it affected some factories very seriously; but it did not by any means destroy them, and incidentally it gave a fine fillip to the British smuggling industry. It certainly injured the trade of neutrals, such as America, Denmark, and Portugal, because if they traded with England they came under the ban of Napoleon, while if they traded with France their ships were seized by the Royal Navy. It injured France, because it shut out, not only the manufactured goods

CAMPAIGN OF FRIEDLAND. 1807.



of England, but also very common luxuries, such as sugar, coffee, tobacco, and all articles which came from the Colonies and America. It injured Napoleon, for it entailed a search all over France and the dependent States for the contraband British merchandise; and this search brought him more unpopularity than anything else.

But the most important and most far-reaching point was that it meant he must be supreme all over Europe. If any port remained open to British goods, either in the Mediterranean, or the Atlantic, or the Baltic, then commerce would pour through it and make a leak in the System. This was what forced him on in his career of conquest. He had overcome Italy, Austria, Prussia, but now found himself face to face with Russia. The System was the chief cause of the campaign in '07 against the Tsar. There was scarcely any other reason which could make it worth while to push forward against the Russians, and if the latter had withdrawn a couple of hundred miles into their marshes and forests Napoleon could never have followed them. On the other hand, he had nothing to fear from them; with the many Prussian fortresses in his hands he could easily hold the line of the Vistula; and if the Russians succeeded in getting across it they would only put themselves into a much more vulnerable position.

But Napoleon had become convinced, not only of his power as a general, but also in the star of his fortune—so he went forward, and the faults of his enemies gave him another triumph which was not altogether deserved.

POLAND.—After Austerlitz the Russians had retreated unpursued, and had never made peace. King Frederick William, before Jena, appealed to the Tsar for help, and found Alexander willing enough to give it; but once again the Russians were late owing to the distance they had to come; indeed, they had not even reached the Vistula by the time that Berlin fell.

During the autumn of '06 Napoleon pushed his forces steadily eastwards, and in December established himself on the line of the Vistula, between Thorn and Warsaw. Garrisons were left in all the fortresses of Prussia, such as Posen and Custrin.

The campaign, which lasted six months, was fought out in the triangle between Dantzig, Konigsburg, and Warsaw. It consisted of several stubborn fights and two pitched battles; the first, in February at Eylau, was claimed as a victory by Napoleon, but was a very doubtful one; the second, in June, at Friedland, was a real success, and enabled him to make peace on good terms.

There was none of the brilliant strategy of Marengo, Ulm, and Jena; there are few lessons in military science to be drawn; and the chief praise must be given to the endurance and gallantry of the troops.

By establishing himself on the Vistula Napoleon held all Prussian Poland, and so far the country was suitable for campaigning; roads were fairly good, towns were plentiful and well built, and the district was rich in supplies. But on the eastern side of the river lay a tract of swamps and forests, broken up by unbridged rivers, without roads of any kind. Napoleon said of Poland, "Dieu, outre l'eau, l'air, la terre, et le feu, a créé une cinquième élément, la boue." All his genius for organisation barely kept the troops alive; indeed, it is hard to understand how they managed to exist.

It would have been wiser to put the army into winter quarters and wait to see whether the enemy would advance. But Napoleon's impatience would brook no delay; he wanted to deal a blow at once, in hopes that it would settle the campaign.

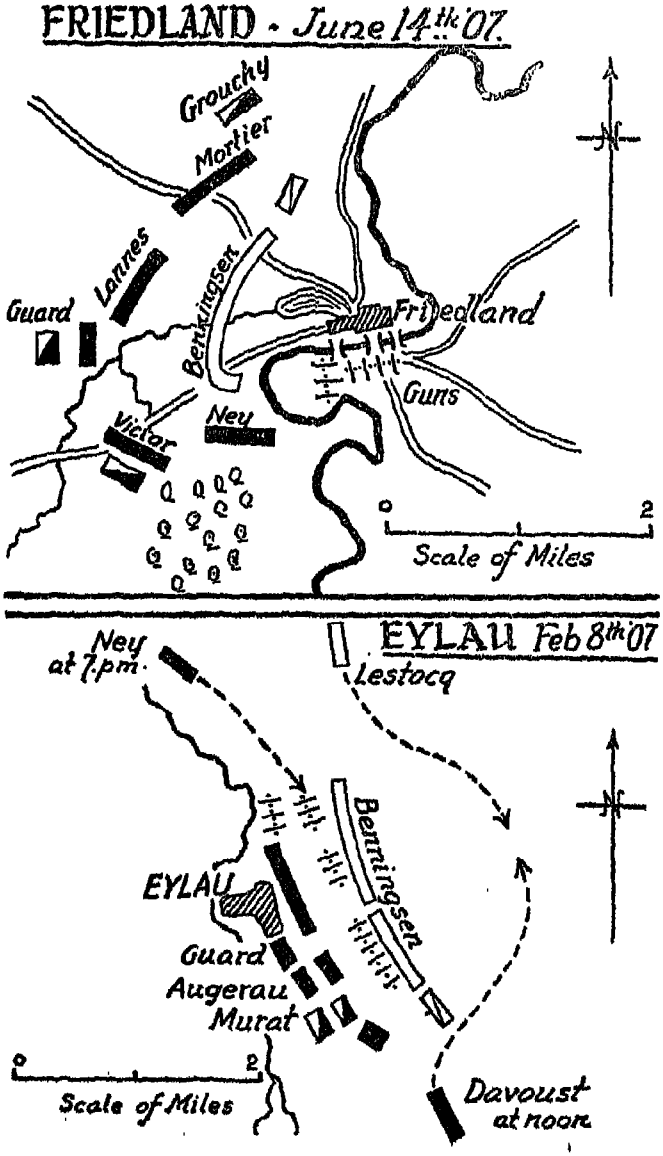
The last remnant of the Prussian army, some 20,000 men under Lestocq, had retired towards Konigsburg. The Russians, about 120,000 strong, lay opposite Warsaw. Napoleon decided to cut in between the two, and pushed forward. Lannes' corps was held up at Pultusk, but

Davoust gained ground on the North side of him, and the Russians fell back. Even Napoleon had to admit that immediate pursuit was hopeless in the mud; he decided to rest his troops, and put them into winter quarters on a very long front, from Warsaw to Elbing (150 miles)—"dispersed to feed."

The Russians were placed under a new commander, Benningsen, who had done well at Pultusk. In the wide distribution of the French forces he saw an opportunity; he would concentrate against their northern flank, thereby drawing closer to the Prussians; at the same time this move might relieve Danzig, which was besieged by the French. A hard frost made the marching easier. The Russians moved off to the North, screened by their forests, and advanced against Bernadotte, whose corps formed the extreme left of the French line. Napoleon sent an order to Bernadotte to retire, hoping the Russians would follow; if they did so Napoleon might be able to get in behind them, cut them off from Konigsburg, and drive them into the sea. His order, however, was intercepted by some Cossacks, and as it was not in cipher it was read by Benningsen, who saw the trap that was opened for him, and refused to enter. Napoleon had hurried northwards; he failed to get in rear of the Russians, but followed them up as they retired. On February 8th was fought the battle of Eylau.

EYLAU.—This was one of the fiercest battles of the nineteenth century. The opponents were nearly equal in numbers, about 70,000 on each side, and the casualties amounted to one-third of those engaged.

Napoleon's centre was in the town of Eylau; but his right wing (Davoust) was eight miles away on the South; his left wing (Ney) was engaged with the Prussians ten miles to the North. The battle began at dawn with a tremendous artillery duel, Napoleon waiting for his wings to close in. The Russians made the first infantry attack towards Eylau, and to check them Augerau was ordered to advance. In


FRIEDLAND - June 14th 07.
Grouchy
Mortier
Lannes
Guard
Bennigsen
Friedland
Guns
Victor
Ney
0
2
Scale of Miles
EYLAU Feb 8th 07
Ney
at 7 p.m.
Lestocq
Bennigsen
EYLAU
Guard
Augerau
Murat
0
2
Scale of Miles
Davoust
at noon

the teeth of a blinding snowstorm the French pressed forward till they came up against a line of guns, whose grape-shot tore lanes in the heavy columns and cut the whole corps in pieces. In five minutes Augerau lost 5,000 men, and was driven back in confusion. This disaster was partially retrieved by Murat, who, with eighty squadrons, charged the enemy's centre and drove it back. The issue still hung in the balance when at midday Davoust came up and got behind the Russian left. Lestocq, however, had broken away from Ney; he now marched round the Russian rear and forced Davoust back again. The position then remained unchanged till night fell. At 8 p.m. Ney arrived and flung his corps into the fight, which went on till ten o'clock in the darkness and the snow. The troops fell apart from sheer exhaustion. Benningsen drew off towards Konigsburg, and the French were left in possession of the field.

Pursuit was quite impossible. According to Marbot, who was on Augerau's staff, the 7th Corps had been 15,000 strong in the morning; it lost all its generals and colonels, and could only muster 3,000 men next day; these were distributed among other corps, and the 7th ceased to exist.

FRIEDLAND.—After this desperate fight at Eylau the French were in sore need of rest, and for the second time Napoleon put them into winter quarters, along the River Passarge.

His position was serious. The Austrians on his right rear remained neutral, but refused to join him, in spite of various bribes that were offered to them. Napoleon even made some overtures to Benningsen, but the latter replied that his orders were to fight, not to negotiate.

For four months the French lay in their winter quarters, and then on May 25th Danzig surrendered to them. This gave them a new base for further operations, which were begun at once.

As the French advanced Benningsen retired fighting; he

then crossed to the eastern bank of the River Alle, and moved down it towards Konigsburg. On June 13th he was at Friedland, when he found that the French had spread out in their advance, and Lannes' corps was isolated not far from the town. Benningsen thought that with the 60,000 men he had at hand he could crush this single corps. He built two extra bridges over the river, and next day took the whole of his force across.

But he made a fatal mistake in beginning the battle with a long cannonade. Lannes stood firm on the defensive, sending urgent messages to inform Napoleon of the situation, and Benningsen's delay gave time for the French troops to hurry to the spot. Their numbers, which had only been 10,000 at dawn, were increased to 30,000 by midday. By 4 p.m. Napoleon had brought up Ney, Victor, Mortier, and the Guard, 80,000 in all, and was strong enough to attack. Ney began on the right, and threw Bagration's corps back into the town. Some Russians made good their escape, and then two of the bridges were destroyed by artillery fire. The Russian right, seeing their retreat might be cut off, made a gallant dash forward, but were forced back to the river, and many of them were drowned. The remnant of the army fled without re-forming to the Niemen.

This battle, fought on the anniversary of Marengo, was a great victory. The Russians lost 25,000 men and nearly all their guns. The French casualties were about 8,000.

While full credit must be given to Napoleon for his energy in bringing up reinforcements and seizing his opportunity, it must be admitted that his enemy made the opportunity for him. Benningsen fought with an unfordable river at his back, a risk which can only be justified by very resolute action. He might have been successful in an immediate attack, but his long artillery bombardment was a fatal mistake, and left him to be hemmed into a position where defeat meant ruin.

"The history of war is the history of mistakes," and the

general who turns to his own advantages the mistakes of his opponent will be the victor. This was where Napoleon excelled.

On the same day Soult reached Konigsburg, which was evacuated by the Prussians. The whole French army advanced to Tilsit without further opposition.

TILSIT.—The battle of Friedland gave Napoleon an opportunity to put an end to operations which could lead to very little, and he was willing enough to listen to proposals for an armistice. On June 25th the celebrated meeting took place between himself and the Tsar, on a raft moored in the middle of the River Niemen. Their interview led to the Treaty of Tilsit, which was signed a few days later.

The French author, Albert Vandal, has written a most interesting book, *Napoléon et Alexandre*, which deals with this period, and studies very carefully the curious changes of policy which are seen in the course of the next year. He points out that Napoleon was sincerely desirous of peace, but real peace could only be attained when it included England. As long as the Mistress of the Seas held out there would always be a rallying-point for new Coalitions and new wars. But as England would not accept Napoleon's terms he had to *conquer peace*, and this is what he set himself to do at Tilsit.

His first object was to separate his enemies by diplomacy. He had to consider England, Russia, Austria, Prussia, and, more remotely, Turkey and Sweden. It was part of his mentality at this time that in dealing with other nations he could only think of three arguments—bribery, threats, and the sword.

By the sword he had dealt with Prussia, and after crushing her army he believed he had nothing more to fear from that country. For the moment this was true. But it was his own tyranny that made the Prussian nation take the place of its army; patriotism and heroism grew out of weakness and selfishness; old jealousies between the

population and the soldiers were forgotten; it was Napoleon himself who made Prussia a great nation.

Russia was dealt with through the personality of the Tsar, and here again Napoleon thought he had gained a real advantage. As Vandal points out, Alexander was already feeling very bitter towards England on account of the feeble way in which the British Government had supported the Coalition. "Toute alliance nait de haine partagée. On assure que le premier mot (du Tsar) à l'Empereur fut celui-ci—'Sire, je hais les Anglais autant que vous.' 'En ce cas,' aurait répondu Napoléon, 'la paix est faite.'"

Alexander was gratified that he could conclude the war with honour, and was flattered by the idea that, in conjunction with Napoleon, he would settle the destinies of Europe. His character was one that could be influenced by working on its sentimental side, and he was therefore an easy dupe for Napoleon's cunning; carried away by the charm and affability of his new friend, he assented to anything, and it was only later on, when they had parted, that he had time to realise that he had gained little either from a material or sentimental point of view.

By the Treaty the Tsar received a small strip of Prussian Poland; he was given a free hand to conquer Finland from the Swedes; he was allowed to indulge in hopes of getting some Balkan provinces, but not Constantinople. In return, he abandoned all alliance with England and joined the Continental System.

Prussia was the victim. The noble Queen Louise humbled herself to plead with the conqueror, but found him ruthless. Alexander, as in honour bound, made some appeals on behalf of his late ally, but they were soon laid aside. Frederick William lost half his territory, half his population, and, by being forced into the Continental System, more than half his commerce. The Prussian possessions on the West bank of the Elbe were taken to form the new Kingdom of Westphalia for Jerome Bonaparte, the third brother to

be promoted to kingly rank. Prussian Poland was to be formed into the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and added to the possessions of the Elector of Saxony, who also became a King. Napoleon thus gained two more vassal kingdoms.

But, most important of all, while Frederick William was forced to agree to all this redistribution of his lands, Napoleon did not even bind himself to evacuate the remaining possessions of Prussia. By a piece of incredible negligence on the part of the Prussian negotiator the French troops were only to be withdrawn when the French demands, which were not specified, had been satisfied. Consequently, by making impossible demands, the victors were able to remain in occupation of the fortresses of Prussia, living at the expense of the conquered. For several years they did remain, holding the country in subjection, and, to a certain extent, threatening Russia.

THE EAST.—The Treaty of Tilsit had every appearance of being a triumph for Napoleon, but in reality it was only a truce. In the course of the next year two great movements developed in Europe, which will be described in later chapters: in Spain Napoleon dethroned the Spanish House of Bourbon and made his brother Joseph King—thus beginning the long war in the Peninsula; in Austria warlike preparations were on foot, and war would mean that the Hapsburgs would be thrown into active alliance with England. In order to avoid this Napoleon wanted to be sure of his own alliance with the Tsar, but soon he began to see that the Russians would ask a price for their assistance and demand territory in Turkey.

All through the preceding century Russia had been gazing covetously at Constantinople, and at Tilsit the question of the partition of Turkey was much discussed. As long as he was at war with the Tsar Napoleon had been a warm supporter of the Sultan, but as soon as peace was made with Russia he had no longer an interest in keeping faith with Turkey. At the same time he did not want to make

an open breach, which would throw the Sultan into alliance with England. The annexation by Russia of the Turkish provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia was therefore thrust into abeyance until peace could be secured with England. When this peace was refused Napoleon was left in a difficult position—he must either fulfil his promises to the Tsar or find some way of evading them.

The course he took was distinctly ingenious. Instead of curbing Alexander's ambition, he encouraged it to go still farther—instead of stopping at the Danube, as at first suggested, he now proposed that the French and Russians should march together through Turkey to India. It was hoped this would stop the complaints of the Tsar; it would at all events gain time, and would constitute another threat against England.

There is no doubt that Napoleon often thought of the East, and nothing would have given him greater pleasure than to carry out his dream of an invasion of India. But it is very doubtful whether his proposal to the Tsar was anything more than a piece of opportunism to gain time.

There were three routes to India—first, round the Cape; second, through Egypt, and third, across Turkey and Persia. The first two imply command of the sea, and the experience in Egypt was sufficient to warn the Emperor not to attempt another such expedition until communications could be made reasonably secure.

There remains the long journey by land, which might be anything over 5,000 miles. From the French frontier to Constantinople would be about 1,500 miles; thence across Asia Minor and Persia to Herat, 2,700 miles; thence over the mountains of Afghanistan to the Indus, 800 miles. Apart from the tremendous obstacles presented by the deserts and the mountains, the distance itself implies a march of eighteen months or more.

In a letter to the Tsar Napoleon said, "An army of 50,000 men, Russians, French, and perhaps a few Austrians, that

penetrated by way of Constantinople into Asia, would not reach the Euphrates before England would tremble and bow the knee before the Continent." This is either bad information or sheer bluff. Nothing would have suited British strategy better than to hear of such an army—the bigger the better, and with Napoleon at its head—in the valley of the Euphrates. In the absence of the tyrant Prussia would rise; Austria had not forgotten Marengo and Austerlitz; the Confederation of the Rhine was not a happy family. The great and successful Coalition which was born in 1813 would have come to life much sooner if Napoleon had departed on his conquest of the East.

And Napoleon himself must have known this. Consequently his proposals were merely intended to divert Alexander from more unpleasant subjects. The Russian, however, was not to be dazzled by such a prospect; his advisers were too well informed of the geography of Northern Persia; he therefore put the proposal on one side and pressed for the immediate partition of Turkey. In these circumstances Napoleon decided that the only solution of his difficulties would be to resume his personal ascendancy over the impressionable Tsar, and he arranged another meeting.

ERFURT.—The old-fashioned town of Erfurt is not far from the battlefield of Jena. Kings, princes, and minor rulers were summoned to behold the spectacle of the two great autocrats embracing each other, and everything was done to make the occasion impressive. The Field of the Cloth of Gold was outshone in splendour, and on the surface goodwill and enthusiasm were supreme.

Erfurt, however, was little more than a play, beautifully staged, well acted, and performed to a crowded house; but underneath the masks lay envy and malice. Alexander was no longer the credulous admirer who had been at Tilsit; the Court and society of St. Petersburg hated the alliance with the French, and had exhibited their sympathies with

the British; his merchants were ruined by the Continental System, except a few who made fortunes by evading it; his army did not love the victor of Austerlitz and Friedland. But, instead of finding Napoleon ready to carry out the fair promises of Tilsit, the Tsar found that he had been invited to Erfurt to support Napoleon still further; he was asked to threaten Austria. This he refused to do, and the friendship was severely strained. In the end he gave an assurance that he would assist the French if Austria attacked, and beyond this he would not go.

Another point was secretly raised which did not tend to harmony. Napoleon had begun again to think of divorce, with a view to a family alliance with one of the royal houses of Europe, and the Tsar had a sister who would make a suitable bride. Talleyrand was ordered to make the suggestion, but received a vague reply. A month later the lady was hurriedly affianced to the heir of the Duchy of Oldenburg. This betrothal was the work of the Tsar's mother, but it was not likely to augment the cordiality between the two Emperors.

From Napoleon's point of view Erfurt was not a success, though he was careful to conceal that fact; he succeeded, however, in keeping his possible enemies separated. Austria and Russia were held apart by the questions of Poland and the Balkans, which both of them wanted. England could not desert the Spaniards, and was alarmed by the Tsar's recognition of Joseph Bonaparte as King of Spain. Prussia was left bitter by the fact that no one would help her misery. In fact, the States of Europe were all too selfish to make a true combination for a common end.

Leaving Erfurt in October, Napoleon made a lightning dash into Spain, to establish Joseph at Madrid and drive the British force of Sir John Moore out of the Peninsula. But even before he had completed his work there he was recalled in haste to Paris. Austria had seized the opportunity of his absence to put her army in the field.

CHAPTER XVI

WAGRAM

1809.—The Austrians had had three years—1806, '07, '08—in which to recover from the disaster of Austerlitz, and had employed the time in preparing for revenge. The Russians were no longer allies, but it was hoped that they would remain neutral. The Spaniards and Portuguese had risen against Joseph Bonaparte in the Peninsula. The brave Tyrolese had risen against the Bavarians. The Prussians were only held from attacking their oppressors by large French garrisons in their big towns. And, finally, the British supplied money, while their forces in the Peninsula were beginning to make themselves felt. Thus Napoleon had many influences working against him.

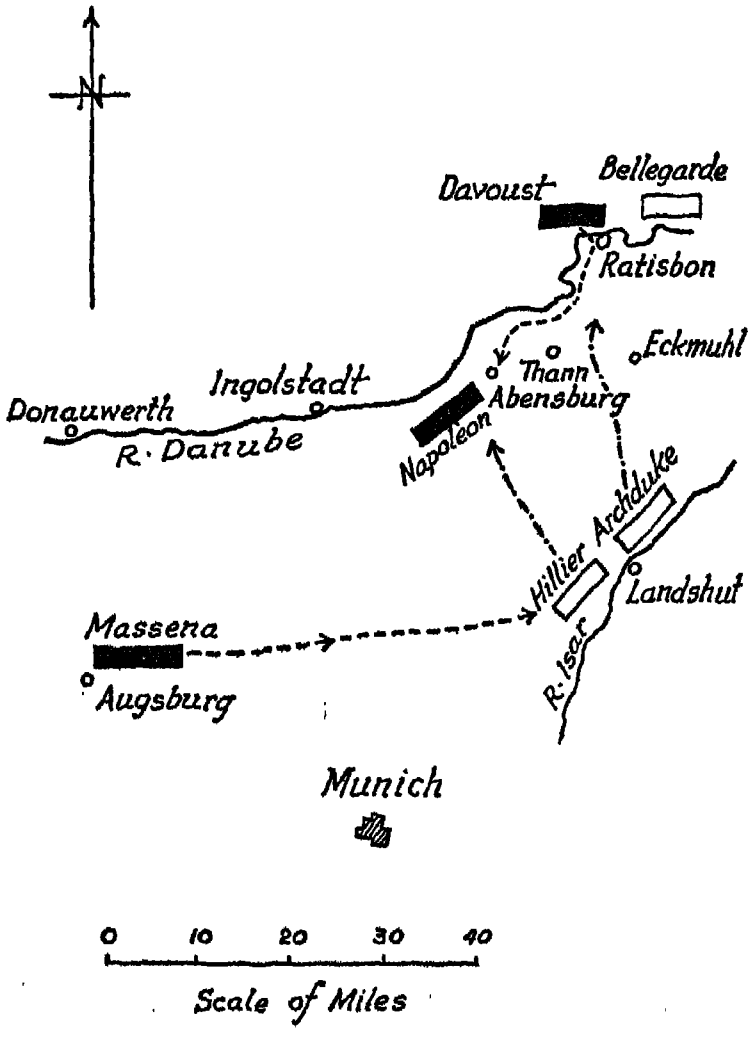
The Archduke Charles, who was a capable organiser, had been building up a new army, which now amounted to 400,000 men, and though he himself would have preferred more time in which to complete his work, the news from Spain pointed to an opportunity too good to be missed. The Austrian advance began in April.

Napoleon had nearly 700,000 men under arms, including Italians, Bavarians, and other Germans; but he was obliged to leave 150,000 in Spain, 200,000 in the fortresses of Prussia, and 60,000 in Italy; he therefore could not make his usual grand concentration. He had, however, 270,000 for the campaign on the Danube, and again his plan was to move on Vienna.

PHASE OF MANŒUVRE.—Berthier had been sent on ahead to take temporary command, but he was not a

CAMPAIGN OF ECKMUHL

April 19th – 23rd 1809



strategist. Disregarding the maxim "Concentrate to Fight," he kept his army widely spread out, and in the middle of April his left (Davoust) was at Ratisbon while his right (Massena) was ninety miles away at Augsburg.

The Archduke had 50,000 under Bellegarde in Bohemia, and his main body of 150,000 near Landshut. He decided to leave Hiller with 60,000 to guard his left while he himself marched to Ratisbon, where he hoped to crush Davoust between his own force and Bellegarde's. The plan was good, but slow execution ruined it.

On April 17th Napoleon arrived at Donauwerth, and was furious at finding his army so dangerously dispersed. Orders were issued in haste for Davoust to join the main body at Abensburg.

On the 19th Davoust marched along the South bank of the Danube, and brushed against the Archduke, who was going the other way. Davoust placed two divisions as a flank guard to hold the Austrians at Thann, while his baggage and the rest of his corps slipped along the bank and joined Napoleon at Abensburg.

This gave Napoleon 120,000 men on the spot. He knew there was some force on his left, so on the 20th he left a detachment under Davoust to watch it. He himself turned against Hiller, and ordered Massena to press forward on the South. As a matter of fact, he believed that the main body of the Austrians was still in the direction of Landshut.

The battle of Abensburg, which now took place, was really a succession of engagements, starting at that town and working down towards Landshut. Hiller was outnumbered, and when he heard that Massena was threatening his left and rear he gave up all hopes of rejoining the Archduke, and retired towards Vienna.

Meanwhile, the Archduke had sent a detachment to occupy Ratisbon; the stone bridge over the Danube was standing, and thus he could get into touch with Bellegarde. Feeling that he had a secure line of retreat if necessary, he

determined to attack Davoust at Eckmuhl, and thereby threaten the French line of communications. On the 22nd he made his attack. Davoust soon came to the conclusion that the Archduke himself, with the Austrian main body, was in front of him; he held on stubbornly, and sent an urgent message to ask Napoleon for support. This cleared up the situation. Napoleon, who had been preparing to follow up Hiller, now ordered all his troops to march back from Landshut to Eckmuhl. When they arrived to reinforce Davoust the Archduke was outnumbered and forced back into Ratisbon. The French followed, and after a fight with a rear-guard they entered the town on April 23rd. In the action against the walls of the town Napoleon went up into the firing-line to urge on his troops, and was wounded in the heel. This, however, did not prevent him from leading his army.

Thus Napoleon had retrieved Berthier's error, and, getting his own army out of a dangerous situation, had turned the tables on the Austrians. Though none of the battles had been decisive, Hiller had been cut off from the main body and the Austrians had lost altogether 70,000 men.

These five days, April 19th to 23rd, are considered by some writers as the most brilliant in Napoleon's career, and he himself seems to have been of that opinion. He often spoke of Abensburg and Eckmuhl with pride, and inferred that he had a complete grasp of the situation throughout. It is hard to say how far this is true, but on one point there can be little doubt—once more it was his driving power that gave him superiority of numbers on the field. The Archduke made no bad mistakes, but his men would not respond to him as the French did to their leader.

After securing Ratisbon, Napoleon moved on Vienna by the South bank of the Danube. Hiller stood to oppose him at Ebersburg, 100 miles West of Vienna, but was heavily defeated after a severe battle. The French entered Vienna for the second time on May 13th, 1809.

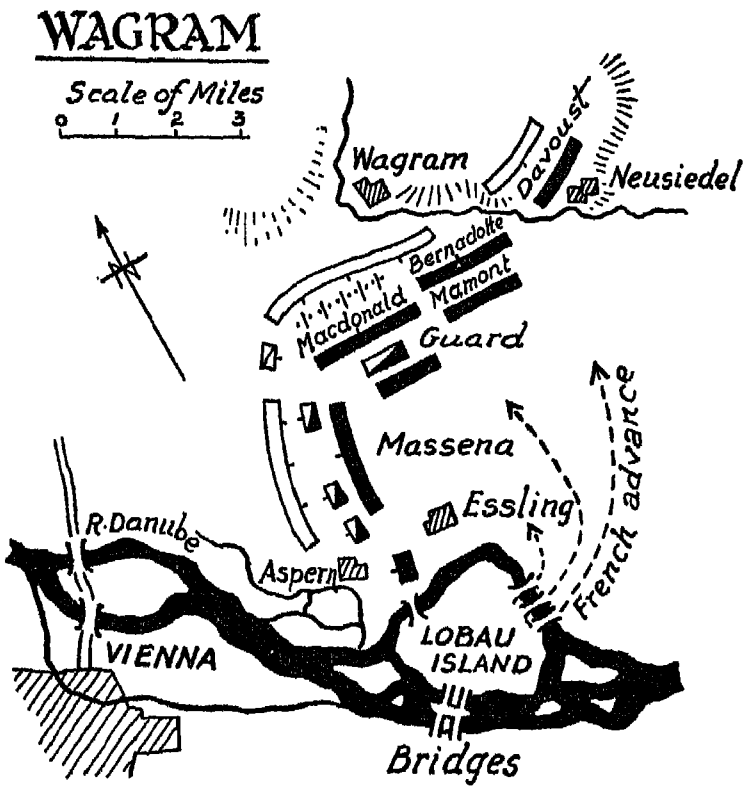
ESSLING.—In spite of their failures, up to this time the Austrians were still prepared to resist. The Archduke collected 120,000 men on the North bank of the Danube, opposite Vienna, and on this occasion he was careful to destroy the bridges.

Napoleon's object was to gain a footing on the North bank and fight a decisive battle. He made his attempt to cross at a point five miles below Vienna, where the river is divided into two branches by the big island of Lobau. A bridge of boats was constructed over the Southern branch, which is 700 yards wide, and Massena crossed to the island on May 19th. More bridges were hastily thrown across the Northern branch, which is only 120 yards wide. On the 21st Lannes and the Guard joined Massena on the far side, bringing the force up to 50,000 men. The villages of Aspern and Essling were immediately occupied.

The Archduke made a furious attack with 80,000 men, and the French had much difficulty in holding their ground till nightfall. On the next day Napoleon brought reinforcements across, and attacked in his turn; but when he was gaining ground the bridge South of Lobau was destroyed by an Austrian fire-ship. As ammunition was running out, and he feared to be cut off from his supplies, Napoleon ordered a retreat to the island. To cover this movement the French clung to the two villages; Essling was lost and retaken many times, and the gallant Lannes was mortally wounded before the retirement was completed.

This battle, which is sometimes called Aspern and sometimes Essling, shares with Eylau the gruesome distinction of being the bloodiest of the nineteenth century, considering the numbers engaged. The Austrians lost 25,000 out of 80,000 and the French 20,000 out of 70,000.

Napoleon was now in a serious position. He had been repulsed in open battle, and his army was crowded on to an island with very insecure access to the supports on the Southern bank. It is said that the Marshals advised a


WAGRAM
Scale of Miles
0 1 2 3
Wagram
Davoust
Neusiedel
Bernadotte
Mamont
Macdonald
Guard
Massena
Essling
French advance
R. Danube
Aspern
VIENNA
LOBAU
ISLAND
Bridges

retreat into Bavaria. This, however, only caused Napoleon to redouble his exertions, and during the next six weeks he devoted himself to make sure of crossing the river. His success is the most remarkable instance in all history of the passage of a great river in the face of a powerful enemy.

The island of Lobau was fortified by many batteries, and was connected with the Southern bank by three good bridges. For crossing the narrower stream on the North ample materials were collected for four pontoon bridges, and these were cunningly concealed in a creek at the East end of the island. Everything was arranged for the crossing to take place as secretly and rapidly as possible, and feints were made towards Aspern to keep the enemy's attention in that direction.

The Archduke was thoroughly deceived. Expecting the attack at the same point as before, he entrenched himself firmly between Aspern and Essling. By this time he had about 140,000 men and 700 guns; another force of 30,000 was at Pressburg, thirty miles down the Danube, under the Archduke John, who had been driven out of Italy by Eugene Beauharnais. The Austrian plan was to allow a portion of the French to cross, and then attack and drive them into the river; failing this, they had a second position on the high ground East and West of Wagram.

Napoleon risked all his communications and concentrated every available man for the decisive blow. By July 4th he had 170,000 men with 600 guns, and everything was ready for the great move.

WAGRAM.—On the stormy night of July 4th—5th the pontoon bridges were dragged into position, *not opposite Aspern*, but at the East end of the island; no less than 150,000 men, including 30,000 cavalry and 400 guns, crossed to the North bank in twenty-four hours. The Archduke was astounded to find the French in full force on his left, and he immediately retired from his entrenched line, which was now useless, to the heights of Wagram. There he checked

Napoleon's advanced troops, and both sides took up positions for battle on the morrow.

On July 6th the Archduke determined to attack the French left, hoping to cut them off from their bridges; at first he had some success, and gained ground towards Essling, but in the end Massena was able to stop the Austrian advance. At the same time Napoleon was pushing forward on the other flank, and Davoust gained the height on the East side of Wagram.

The Emperor saw that this last movement assured victory. He ordered Macdonald to assault the Austrian centre. Covered by the fire of the "100-gun battery," the French advanced in heavy columns, and suffered terribly from the steady fire of the enemy. But the Young Guard came up in support, and after a fierce struggle the Austrian centre was broken. The Archduke had hoped to hold out till his brother brought up 30,000 men from Pressburg, but as yet there was no sign of him, and therefore he decided at 3 p.m. to break off the battle before his army was completely crushed. The retreat was carried out in good order, and the French were too exhausted to pursue.

The Archduke John arrived on the scene at 6 p.m. and found the enemy already in possession of the field, so he was obliged to make his way back to Pressburg. If, like Blucher at Waterloo, he had arrived before the main body fell back, he might have saved the day.

Wagram was not a complete victory, though the Austrian losses, which amounted to 36,000, were double those of the French. The Archduke Charles drew off to Znaim, fifty miles North-west of Vienna, and there halted and proposed an armistice. Napoleon at once agreed.

Hoping that the British or Spaniards might create a diversion in their favour, the Austrians dragged out the negotiations for some weeks, but finally the Treaty of Schonbrunn was signed in October. Napoleon received an indemnity of 80,000,000 francs; Austria gave up Trieste

and all the coast of the Adriatic, also most of her portion of Poland; the Tyrolese were deserted and left to their fate. By securing the ports of the Adriatic Napoleon hoped to complete his Continental System.

THE SECOND MARRIAGE.—The most important result of the campaign was seen in the future diplomacy of Vienna. The great Austrian Minister, Stadion, had been an enthusiastic patriot and reformer; now, however, his hopes were crushed, and he begged to be allowed to retire. His place was taken by Metternich, who for the next forty years guided the fortunes of the Hapsburgs.

The brilliant Metternich, though only thirty-six years of age, had already seen much service in the Corps Diplomatique, and had been Ambassador at Berlin, St. Petersburg, and Paris. He was well known to Napoleon, and was very intimate with Talleyrand, and it was assumed that his appointment was a step towards close alliance with France; his action for the next three years supported that idea.

After Wagram Austria appeared to be in a hopeless condition, but Metternich was astute enough to see that the friendship between Napoleon and Alexander would not last, and he decided that the best hope of restoring his country to its former importance lay in making an alliance with France. His first efforts were therefore directed to this end, and it was chiefly due to him that the Austrian Archduchess, Marie Louise, was given in marriage to Napoleon.

The divorce of Josephine was finally settled in December '09, and Napoleon once more made a proposal for the hand of the Tsar's younger sister. There were signs, however, that an unfavourable answer might be expected, and to avoid the humiliation which this would entail Napoleon willingly accepted the scheme of Metternich. Berthier was sent to Vienna with a formal request to the Hapsburg Emperor, and the marriage was performed by proxy at once. Napoleon showed the eagerness and excitement of

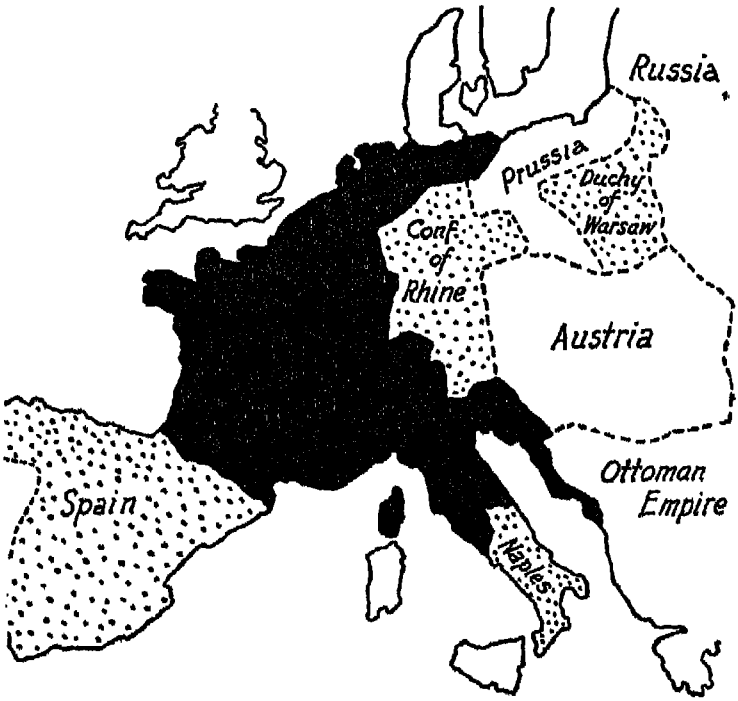
a boy in welcoming his bride. A second ceremony was performed with much pomp in Notre Dame on April 2nd, 1810, and for a time Napoleon devoted himself to the new Empress. He again took lessons in dancing, and encouraged gaiety in the Court. His joy was complete when a son was born on March 2nd, 1811.

This infant, who was known as the King of Rome, seemed to be a guarantee for the security of the dynasty, and his birth marks the zenith of Napoleon's power. It seems that he would have been willing to halt there and devote himself to consolidating his position, but he had embarked on a course in which there was no halting-place; he must either go backward and relax his Continental System, or go forward and insist on its rigorous enforcement. The System was bringing distress to England and Europe at the same time, and it was a question which would be ruined first. Napoleon clung to the belief that England was on the point of giving way, but he was wrong.

PART III

THE MAN AGAINST DESTINY

EUROPE in 1811



FRENCH EMPIRE *Including N. Italy, Belgium & Holland.*

VASSAL STATES *Including Confederation of the Rhine. Naples (King Murat, brother in law) Spain (King Joseph, brother), Duchy of Warsaw (under King of Saxony).*

INDEPENDENT REALMS *All in alliance by treaties, or neutral, except Gt Britain and Portugal.*

CHAPTER XVII

The Decline

Broadly speaking, Napoleon fought twelve wars. In six of these he was successful; the others ended in complete disaster. We now come to the last five, in which he suffered losses far greater than any he had ever inflicted. While reading them the military student must keep before him these questions: What was it that robbed Napoleon of victory? Was he simply overwhelmed by numbers? Did he encounter generals better than himself? Was there some mental or physical decline in the man himself?

Several authors put the decline down to physical disease. This would account in some cases for his failure, and is certainly the simplest explanation. Frankly, I do not agree with them. A man over forty who is growing stout may show less physical energy than the young adventurer, but this is not a symptom of disease. The point will be discussed again later.

In considering the mental powers of a commander it is as well to bear in mind the distinctions between the strategist, the tactician, and the leader of men. A great general need not be, and rarely is, all three.

We may take Von Moltke as an example of the strategist. Far the greater part of his work was done before a shot was fired; as a basis for his plans he collected information; he studied resources, geography, politics, all the factors, "all the details"; his foresight showed him how the coming war would differ from past ones owing to the march of science—telegraphs, railways, breech-loaders; he trained

his army and staff to meet the new conditions; he set the troops in motion in the right direction. He did not command men; he commanded three armies. When once the clash of arms had begun Von Moltke did not gallop about the field of battle; he led no forlorn hope; he made no stirring appeals ("he was the man who knew how to keep silence in seven languages"). He reserved himself to maintain a grip of the big situation and to pierce the fog of war by discriminating judgment. The strategist supplies the brains of an army, and his outstanding marks are knowledge, foresight, and imagination.

The tactician supplies an eye for a country and an instinct for an opportunity; he rules, not over the wide theatre of war, but over the field of battle. As examples we have Napoleon at Austerlitz, Wellington at Salamanca.

The leader supplies that indefinable something which for want of a better word we call morale. He may appeal to patriotism or religion to aid him, or he may be dependent on his own personality. Balzac's old *fantassin* says, "Alors Napoléon, qui n'était encore que Bonaparte, nous souffle je ne sais quoi dans le ventre; et l'on marche la nuit, et l'on marche le jour, on court les rosser à Rivoli, Lodi, Arcole." That was leadership. The leader need not be a Bayard or a Galahad, he need not even be popular—the Iron Duke was not loved, but he was followed. The best example of a leader, as contrasted with the strategist and tactician, is the Maid of Orleans. She had no knowledge of war; she had never put on armour or drawn a bow; but she felt that her Voices had given her a divine mission to save France. It is immaterial whether this beautiful part of the legend be accepted or not; the important fact, which cannot be disputed, is that she convinced and inspired her followers; they closed up the ranks which had been torn by treachery and cowardice and folly; they drew their swords afresh. As a leader of men, after St. Joan, I put Napoleon, and then the British subaltern.

No man has combined the strategist, tactician, and leader better than the young General Bonaparte in his first campaign. To the end of his career his men continued to follow him. As a tactician we still see at least flashes of his old genius ; in 1814 he kept at bay armies which far outnumbered his little handful of men.

It seems then that the decline must be in the strategist. As already said, the outstanding marks of the strategist are knowledge, foresight, and imagination. I think that Napoleon's brain was as keen as ever, but his strategy failed because it was based, not on knowledge, but on ignorance. He did not know the forces he had arrayed against himself ; hitherto he had fought against monarchs and their professional armies—now there were nations against him ; hitherto he had ruined every Coalition by thrusting between the allies insidious wedges, such as Hanover and Poland ; he did not know that eventually their selfish interests would be laid aside when they realised the common danger ; he did not know that the people of France, whom he had fed on glory, were gorged to repletion—that the Marshals wanted to enjoy the rank and wealth he had bestowed upon them.

This ignorance seems to be due to three causes. First, he had so awed his household that no one dare give him bad news or even good advice, much less any contradiction. Second, he was overworked ; and this brings us back to his system of personal control. While he had only a small army he could control it perfectly ; when he became First Consul his marvellous powers enabled him still to maintain control. But now he ruled an Empire which included seven vassal kingdoms and commanded armies which amounted to 800,000 men ; he refused to decentralise, and tried to keep everything in his own hands. The result was he had not the time to study all the questions that arose.

The third and most important cause of ignorance was self-deception—wilful self-deception ; " he used against

himself the power of deceiving others which he knew so well how to wield." He had grown accustomed to find his wishes become law; he now began to regard them as facts. The deception was perhaps not complete; he was like a financier who is subconsciously aware of his ruin, but rushes into further extravagance, to convince himself and the world that all is well.

Attempts have been made to show that his errors, though fatal in their results, were only slight, that a very little would have turned the scale, and that it is only the knowledge which we now possess that dares call his plans hopeless. There are, however, very significant facts which refute this argument. Talleyrand and Fouché left his service in 1810; these were probably the best informed men in France, Talleyrand as regards Europe, Fouché as regards Paris and the Empire. They were clever enough to keep their places had they wanted to do so. Talleyrand certainly urged moderation, but, when his warnings were disregarded, he and Fouché foresaw the end, and were careful to avoid being involved in the disaster.

Louis Bonaparte, who had been put on the throne of Holland in 1806, seems to have made real efforts for his people; but in 1810, when Napoleon insisted on the strict observance of his Customs Regulations, Louis, seeing the ruin of his kingdom, fled in secret to Bohemia.

Bernadotte was one of the shrewdest military brains in Europe; he was a Prince of the Empire, and would have clung to Napoleon had he believed that the latter's schemes would prove successful; but in 1810 he was willing to throw up his chances in France when he was elected Crown Prince of Sweden, and in 1813 he took the field on the side of the allies.

There were others, but these four, representing the family, diplomacy, the police, and the army, are sufficient to show that clear-sighted men were already able to see the writing on the wall, even during the most magnificent period of the Empire.

So Napoleon was ignorant of things which could be seen by people less gifted than himself; they kept their eyes open—he did not.

His ignorance was so complete that Thiers says, " Il fut pis qu'un mauvais politique, il présenta au monde le triste spectacle du génie descendu à l'état d'un pauvre insensé."

" Pauvre insensé "—nearly all the biographers make use of the word " insanity," but it is strange that the suggestion has not been more definitely discussed. The point is of importance, because a man who is insane is absolved from responsibility for his crime. The serious charge against Napoleon is that he was bloodguilty.

Lord Rosebery says that insanity is a relative term, and finds Napoleon partially insane. But the wall of an asylum draws a line between the sane and insane as definite and concrete as that which the wall of a prison draws between the guilty and not guilty. The law can be called upon to pronounce judgment, and judgment must be based on evidence. The tremendous schemes for the invasion of Russia, an expedition to India, the Continental System, have been loosely described as insane, but they would not for one moment be accepted as evidence; however impossible they may be, they only prove bad calculation or bad information.

There is some evidence of delusions. For instance, in '12 and '14 Napoleon issued orders for troops which did not exist, and insisted even when the mistakes were pointed out. But they sound more like " cussedness " than insanity. It is safe to say that there is no evidence that would absolve him in a Court of Law from responsibility. Insanity must therefore be applied only in its relative sense—to imply the extravagance of his ideas and the extreme measure of his obstinacy. It must be admitted that the word persists in suggesting itself.

To sum up—Napoleon was not insane; his genius was

ruined by self-deception ; his plans failed because they were based on ignorance.

The tragedy lies in the loneliness of the man. If only he had found a friend, a father confessor, a wife, in whose presence he could tear off his mask, he might have done himself justice, but he persisted in wearing it even when seeing himself in his own looking-glass. If only there had been some authority to control and direct his genius, history would be written differently, and his fame might be unclouded. But he was a lonely despot.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Peninsula

Napoleon himself spent less than three months altogether in Spain, and only the briefest survey will be made here of the long war in the Peninsula. But it demands notice, because for six years it kept something like 200,000 French troops engaged in fruitless operations when they were urgently needed, and might have saved the Empire, on other fields. It was the outcome of unprovoked aggression, started with the idea of completing the Continental System.

THE POLICY OF MUDDLE.—Up to 1808 England had done nothing on land which had any real effect on the general situation. On the seas Trafalgar had been decisive enough to obviate the necessity for further naval battles; from '05 to '15 the seas were open to our commerce, and closed to Napoleon and his allies.

Our army, however, had not yet done anything effective. The great Prime Minister Pitt was as bad a strategist as British politicians generally are, and apparently he had no military expert to advise him. Our land forces were small, and were frittered away in wretched little expeditions all over Europe.

In '93 feeble efforts had been made in Belgium and at Toulon; in '95 a force was intended for Quiberon, in La Vendée, but no troops ever landed; in '98 another force was sent to Lisbon. Sir R. Abercrombie's victory in Egypt in '01 brought glory but no great material results. In '05 a force was sent to Naples; in '07 to Stralsund, in the Baltic (100 miles North of Berlin); but as it started three days after the battle of Friedland it was, of course, quite useless.


SPAIN · 1808-'13 ·
N
Bayonne
Toulouse
Ferrol
Corunna
Bilbao
Vittoria
Burgos
Oporto
Valladolid
Saragossa
R. Douro
Salamanca
Ciudad
Rodrigo
Fuentes
Madrid
Talavera
R. Tagus
Vimiera
Torres
Vedras
Lisbon
Badajos
Albuera
Baylen
Seville
Cadiz
Trafalgar
Scale of Miles
0
100
200

In each case the idea had been to make a diversion or encourage an ally. But the only person they encouraged was Napoleon himself, who laughed at such miserable pin-pricks; our allies were not only discouraged, but grew furiously angry at the half-heartedness of these dilatory measures, which left the impression that England would spend money but would make no other sacrifice for the common good.

When the Duke of Portland was persuaded to become Prime Minister in '08, Canning went to the Foreign Office and Castlereagh to the War Office; the influence of these young statesmen marks the first stage of an improved policy. The Militia Bill was passed, adding 300,000 men to our land forces, and the expeditions overseas were made sufficiently strong to demand attention.

There was, however, one more fiasco—the expedition to Walcheren. Forty thousand troops under the Earl of Chatham (elder brother of Pitt), and 38 ships under Sir Richard Strachan, were despatched against Antwerp, with a view to destroying the naval arsenal and ship-building yard. But they started three weeks *after* the battle of Wagram. Instead of pushing resolutely on to Antwerp, the force was disembarked on the island of Walcheren and laid siege to the fort of Flushing; in three months 10,000 men died of fever, and the expedition went home. There was a furious outburst of indignation in London.

> Lord Chatham, with his sword all drawn,
> Stood waiting for Sir Richard Strachan;
> Sir Richard, longing to be at 'em,
> Was waiting for the Earl of Chatham.

The only other result was an exchange of recriminations between Castlereagh and Canning which ended in a duel, in which the latter was slightly wounded. They both resigned office, and Portland died of the shock.

But the good work had been begun, and a great general arose to carry it on. Thackeray says: "The resolute

faith which the Duke of Wellington had inspired in the whole English nation was as intense as that more frantic enthusiasm with which at one time the French regarded Napoleon." The Peninsular War laid the foundations of many of those traditions which British soldiers are taught to reverence, and which form part of our national inheritance. Materially it was a very great factor in the downfall of Napoleon.

PORTUGAL.—The Government at Lisbon refused to carry out in full the Continental System, and this was sufficient excuse for Napoleon to attack it. In '07 a force was ordered to Portugal, with Junot in command. Junot was not a great general, but he had claims on Napoleon as an old friend and, furthermore, his presence in Paris was undesirable owing to a suspected attachment between him and the Emperor's sister Caroline Murat. It was partly owing to this that he received the appointment. In November '07 he started with 20,000 men to march from Bayonne into Portugal. As he had been ordered to cover 500 miles in about thirty days, his troops were soon worn out, and only a couple of thousand weary men reached Lisbon; the remainder were left straggling on the way. But even this handful was sufficient to frighten the House of Braganza, who packed up and fled to Brazil. Portugal appeared to be finished, but another nation had been added to the roll of Napoleon's enemies.

SPAIN.—After this apparent success at Lisbon Spain looked like another easy prey, and the conqueror could not resist so tempting an opportunity. Most historians agree that Napoleon really believed his administration would increase the welfare of the country, but his methods in annexing it were the most iniquitous that even he himself ever perpetrated.

For about four years Charles IV of Spain had been an "ally" of France; in other words, he had been ordered to send his fleet to fight Napoleon's battle and had lost it entirely, also to send 15,000 troops to the shores of the

Baltic to fight Napoleon's battles there, also to close his ports to British commerce, thereby ruining his own merchants and impoverishing his people.

Napoleon's share of the alliance was to guarantee the integrity of Spain and to award King Charles the title of Emperor of the Two Americas—which title sounded big enough, but was not well defined.

Spain had long been in a pitiable condition of misgovernment, and the Court was regarded with hatred and contempt. The King was a senile nonentity. His shameless Queen shared the power with her lover, Godoy, who was made Minister and awarded the high-flown title of Prince of Peace. The heir was Prince Ferdinand, a youth of twenty-three, who loathed Godoy, and consequently quarrelled with his own mother. The nation was divided. On one side were supporters of the Queen, on the other the popular party who looked to the Prince as a possible deliverer. The quarrel increased in bitterness till Godoy accused Ferdinand of conspiring against the Crown ; accusations and scandals followed one another, and each side in turn made an appeal to Napoleon. This afforded him the opportunity for which he was looking.

Early in '08 under the pretence of reinforcing Junot, a large force was sent into the Peninsula and established itself in the Northern fortresses, while Murat marched on Madrid with a couple of divisions. The impression was given that Napoleon would place the popular Ferdinand on the throne, and the banners of France bore the strange device of " Liberty." They were received as deliverers by the population, but the Court was sufficiently shrewd to recognise the Imperial Eagles behind the doves of peace. The King made a futile plan to escape to his Empire of America, wherever that might be (he hoped at least it would be out of reach of Napoleon) ; but the plan was thwarted by his dutiful son, who was afraid of being carried off at the same time. The result was a riot, in which the

Prince of Peace was nearly beaten to death and only escaped through the tearful intervention of his royal mistress. The King, in a panic, handed over the crown to his son, but three days later demanded it back. The son refused to part with it, and the whole crowd took their tales of woe to Napoleon, who was awaiting them at Bayonne.

The judgment of Solomon was short and to the point: they had all forfeited any right to the throne—apparently because the mob of Madrid had insulted Murat's soldiers; the throne was therefore vacant; Joseph Bonaparte was ordered to come from Naples to reign in Madrid and Murat was sent to take his place as King of Naples; the Spanish royalties retired to chateaux in France and received pensions (to be paid by Spain). It all looked very simple, and Napoleon was satisfied that he had gained another vassal kingdom.

His satisfaction was, however, short-lived. By his bargain at Bayonne he thought he had won a kingdom; in reality it lost him his Empire, and, though the account was not settled in full till six years later, it began to drain his resources at once.

The whole Spanish nation rose against the foreign usurper. In July 17,000 French, under Dupont, were forced to lay down their arms at Baylen, in the South. In August Junot capitulated to the British in Portugal. Joseph fled from Madrid after a reign of one week. The fury of Napoleon may be imagined. Reinforcements were hurried into Spain, and as soon as he could tear himself away from Erfurt he went down to assume the command in person. He retook Madrid, reinstated Joseph, and drove Sir John Moore back on Corunna. When he left the country in January '09 he believed that a spasmodic rising had been quelled and that all fear of British intervention was over. It was only by degrees that he learnt his mistake.

THE RISING.—Though there was no doubt about the courage and enthusiasm of the Spaniards, the national

rising was badly organised. There was no recognised head of the movement, which was therefore directed by committees called Juntas; these were full of talk, but all they did was to squabble among themselves. Fortunately organisation and co-operation were less indispensable here than they are in most cases; the Spanish word *guerilla* has been adopted in many languages to describe the warfare which the fierce peasants waged against the troops of France. Local bands hung round French convoys—woe to the stragglers!—and took refuge in their mountains when threatened. Though the Spaniards gave us little aid on the field of battle with regular troops, let us ever remember that for six years they were doing great and continuous work in their own way. Their defence of Saragossa and other towns cost Napoleon thousands of lives. Their attacks on the long lines of communication kept the enemy in a state of danger, discomfort, and tension. In fact, the French found Spain as unpleasant as the sands of Egypt or the swamps of Poland. From Bayonne to Madrid is 250 miles, to Lisbon 500, and though they held fortresses at points along the roads there were long stretches of wild, bleak country. The French methods of seizing supplies soon taught the poor inhabitants to conceal the little they had. "Spain is a country where a large army will starve and a small one be cut to pieces."

THE BRITISH.—For the British, on the other hand, the selection of Spain as a theatre for our intervention was sound. The communications with England were made secure by our command of the sea; round the coast there are several good harbours which could be used as alternative bases, and the supplies could be brought up from the nearest port. By a system of cash payments in gold the inhabitants were induced to furnish guides and spies and such provisions as they could spare.

But, most important of all, there was a British commander who knew his work and had the strength to carry it

through. Great indeed was the task in front of Sir Arthur Wellesley. To begin with, his opponents were fine soldiers, under Marshals who had learnt their trade on many a bloody field; but they were not his only difficulty. The Juntas were exasperating allies, full of promises and their own importance; they demanded huge subsidies, they promised supplies, transport, and armies to co-operate, but after his first experience of their co-operation at Talavera the British commander wrote bitterly that he would "fight *for* them but never *with* them again." Scarcely less exasperating was the Junta in Westminster; after its futile experiments elsewhere it was depressed and parsimonious and peevish; the correspondence between the man on the spot and the men in office was not cordial.

Besides all this, there were troubles with his own troops. Later on, when they had served a year or two under such generals as Craufurd and Picton, they were matchless soldiers, and the names emblazoned on our Regimental Colours bear witness to their heroism; but when they first landed in Portugal they were not the flower of the British nation—and Wellesley had no illusions on the subject. It must be admitted that he was not a popular commander, and, indeed, though he cared for the health and comfort of his men, he never unbent or made a bid for popularity. Rightly has he been called the Iron Duke; he refused to be hustled, either by his Government or his allies or his enemy, but with cool patience he awaited his opportunity, and he got it in the end.

It must be conceded that the unfortunate Joseph had his troubles, too. His imperial brother sent him orders which could not possibly be carried out; his new subjects were to be conciliated, but at the same time they must provide the French army with everything, and pay heavy contributions in cash; all opposition was to be punished with death. It was not until '11 that Joseph was given authority over all the Marshals in Spain, and even then they

did not fear him as they feared Napoleon. Soult, Victor, Ney, Massena, Bessieres, were all jealous of each other, and refused to co-operate; their quarrels, which were well known, did not tend to encourage their troops.

It is important to remember that during the years '10 and '11 the only forces in arms against Napoleon were the Allies in the Peninsula—British, Portuguese, and Spanish. He might, therefore, have brought his whole weight to bear on them and taken the command himself; the Duke expected that he would come to control his unruly Marshals. But he had married a wife, there were many occupations to keep him in Paris, and so he put the matter off until it was too late.

STRATEGY.—Perhaps the most golden rule in war is, "Do not do what your enemy wants you to do." It would have suited the French very well if Wellesley had pushed forward towards the Pyrenees; the British would have lost men on the long march and have left their depots far behind; they would have knocked their heads against the fortresses near the frontier, where the French troops could gather round. Therefore, instead of doing these things Wellesley refused to be drawn too far from his base, and he left the French to do the marching and starving. By occasional movements forward he kept his enemies on the alert, and defeated them at such battles as Talavera and Salamanca, but before they could gather round him in dangerous strength he drew back to Portugal, and let them march and starve a little longer before he advanced again. Against strategy of this kind the Marshals could do little, in spite of their superior forces, and they did a good deal less than they might have done. So through these years the British army grew stronger and better, while the French army dwindled. The following is a brief summary of the important events:

1807.—Junot marched to Lisbon without opposition.

1808.—One hundred thousand French troops arrived and

occupied the whole Peninsula. Joseph was proclaimed King, and the Spanish Rising began. Dupont surrendered at Baylen with 17,000 men. Eighteen thousand British troops arrived to assist the Portuguese, beat Junot at Vimiera, and compelled him to sign the convention of Cintra, by which he evacuated Portugal and was shipped back to France. Napoleon arrived in October with reinforcements and drove Sir John Moore out of Spain.

1809.—Wellesley brought a fresh army to Lisbon; aided by the Portuguese, he crossed the Douro in May and drove Soult northwards with heavy loss. He then advanced up the Tagus towards Madrid, and defeated Joseph at Talavera (July 27th). After this he retired to Portugal. He was made Viscount Wellington and Baron Douro.

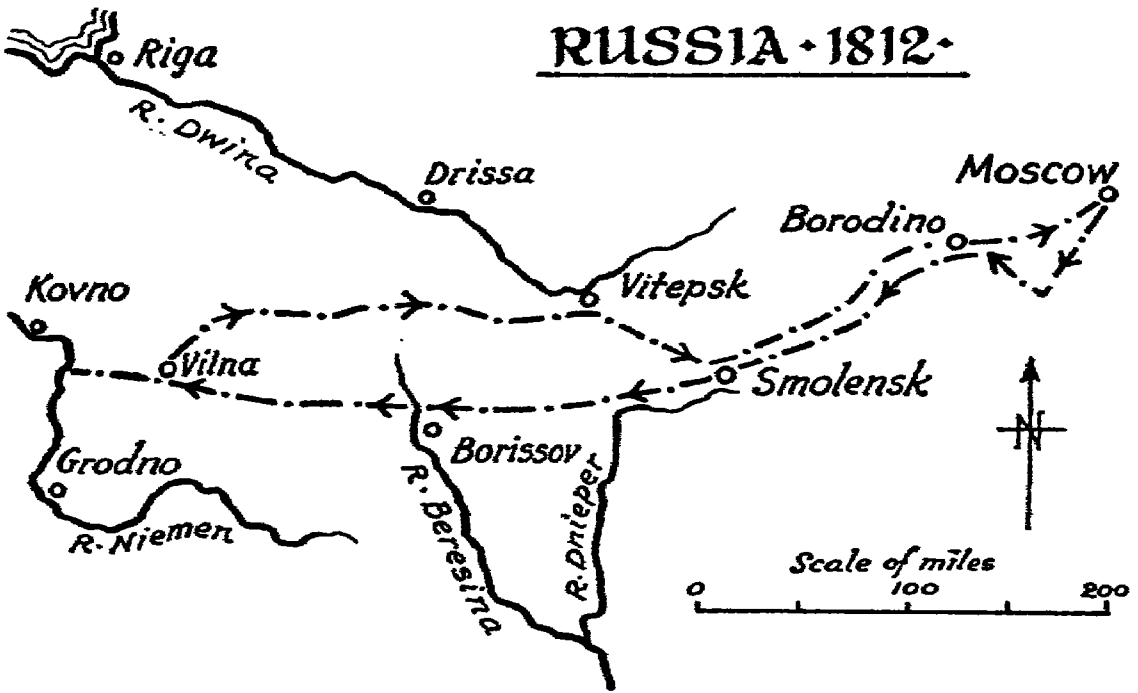
1810.—Massena, with 70,000, invaded Portugal. Wellington checked him at Busaco and then retired to the fortified lines of Torres Vedras, outside Lisbon.

1811.—Massena could not break through the lines, and starvation forced him to retire. Wellington followed him up and defeated him at Fuentes D'Onoro. Marmont superseded Massena on May 5th. Soult had meanwhile advanced on the South bank of the Tagus, but was repulsed by Beresford at the bloody battle of Albuera.

1812.—The best French troops went off to Russia. Wellington was reinforced and advanced. He stormed Rodrigo in January and Badajoz in April. He defeated Marmont by fine tactics at Salamanca on July 22nd, and forced the French out of Madrid. Once more, however, he had to retreat to Portugal.

1813.—The disaster in Russia in '12 forced Napoleon to recall more troops from Spain. Prussia, Russia, and afterwards Austria, were all in arms against him. It was no longer the time for cautious strategy in the Peninsula, so Wellington, with 100,000 seasoned troops, began his great advance. On June 21st he won a decisive victory over Joseph at Vittoria, which finally shattered the French power

in Spain. He then pressed forward towards Bayonne, fighting his way across the rivers Nivelle and Nive, and was engaged with Soult near Toulouse when news was received of Napoleon's first abdication ; the campaign was therefore at an end.


RUSSIA · 1812 ·
Riga
R. Dwina
Drissa
Moscow
Borodino
Vitepsk
Kovno
Vilna
Smolensk
Grodno
Borissov
R. Niemen
R. Beresina
R. Dnieper
N
Scale of miles
0
100
200

CHAPTER XIX

Moscow

It was the Continental System that started Napoleon on his adventure in the Peninsula, and it was the same System that pushed him into the fatal campaign in Russia. Alexander had gradually learnt that an alliance with Napoleon was a doubtful pleasure, while his Court and his merchants had never had any doubts on the subject at all—they regarded the alliance as disgraceful and ruinous. When the other ports of Europe were closed to British goods a considerable amount of contraband trade poured through the Baltic to Riga and St. Petersburg, and thence into Germany and Austria. At first Alexander closed his eyes, but later on he gave up all pretence of adherence to the System, which thereupon lost most of its effect. By this time, however, it had become such an obsession with Napoleon that he would spare no efforts to enforce it. This was the real cause of the war. Minor causes contributed to the irritation; the marriage proposals had hurt the pride of both the autocrats; Napoleon's suspicious behaviour over the promised partition of Turkey had kindled resentment at St. Petersburg.

Napoleon himself foresaw that he would have to fight in order to enforce the System, and consequently he began preparations on a huge scale. In matters of organisation he was as good as ever. His total forces, including those left on the roads in Germany, amounted to 650,000 men; of these about half were French, a quarter Germans and Austrians, the remainder Poles, Italians, and Swiss. His striking force was, as usual, formed into a centre and two

wings. The centre (200,000) included the best French troops; it started from Kovno, and the line of march is shown on the attached sketch. The left included some Prussians under Yorck, and operated towards Riga, where it did nothing. The right (150,000), under Jerome Bonaparte, started from Grodno. On the extreme right were 30,000 Austrians under Schwarzenberg, but, like the Prussians, they did nothing.

The Russians had two armies for immediate action: on the North the main body (150,000), under Barclay de Tolly, at Drissa; on the South 50,000, under Prince Bagration, opposite Jerome. A third army, which had been on the Danube, was called northwards, but did not arrive till November. A fourth army, which had been employed in Finland, also came into play in November.

STRATEGY.—Napoleon's idea, as usual, was to defeat the enemy's main body in one decisive battle, believing that Alexander would then sue for peace. He hoped that the Russians would be foolish enough to meet him at their frontier, and give him another opportunity like Friedland. Failing this, he intended to march on Moscow, which he believed to be the "heart of Russia." At the outset his object was to cut in between Barclay and Bagration and defeat them in detail.

The Russians countered this strategy by observing the rule which Wellington had found so golden—"Do not do what your enemy wants you to do." Napoleon wanted an immediate battle while his troops were fresh; they refused to give him one. Later on he wanted to make peace on the strength of his triumph in entering Moscow; again they refused.

It is not clear to whom the credit should be awarded for the fine strategy of the Russians. It was real strategy, which consists, not merely in moving troops, but also in bringing into full play any factor that is advantageous, such as Time, Space, Topography, Climate. The big factor on

the Russian side was distance; there are 600 miles of poor country between the Niemen and Moscow. If there had been a single line of railway along this route Napoleon's difficulties would have vanished, but there were only bad, unmetalled roads; in fact, these 600 miles were almost as impassable for a large army as the Straits of Dover.

Wellington's success in luring Massena to the lines of Torres Vedras had been noticed and discussed in Russia. It is said that the Prussian Scharnhorst first urged the scheme of retreat on the Tsar. Barclay was certainly in favour of it, especially as he felt that his own forces were too small to repulse the French in a pitched battle. But it was not an easy scheme to carry out; it suggested weakness and fear, and roused angry murmurs in the army, while the inhabitants on the line of march could not understand the necessity for sacrificing their towns and farms.

As regards the distribution of troops, a General Phull prepared a plan. The main body was placed in a big entrenched camp at Drissa. It was not known whether Napoleon meant to strike at Moscow or St. Petersburg, but the camp was within striking distance of either road. Bagration's army was to remain 150 miles to the South to threaten the other flank of the French. This scheme has been severely criticised as a bad dispersion of force. But though "concentrate to fight" is a sound maxim, the intention in this case was to *avoid* fighting, and therefore the necessity for concentration disappears. The scheme turned out badly, because at the last moment it was changed, and the new plan was to concentrate the two armies and give battle; by that time it was nearly too late, and Bagration had much difficulty in joining the main body. But if the original scheme had been carried through to its logical end, the initial distribution of the troops was not unsound.

My impression is that Barclay de Tolly was the one man (on either side) who saw the possibilities of the situation and the probable course of the war. He knew that the

nation would not give up Moscow without a battle. But he did all he could, even allowing himself to be accused of cowardice, in order to avoid the decisive battle until the French were exhausted by their long march. His plan was not carried out in full, and he was superseded before the fruits of it were ripe, but he was the man who defeated Napoleon.

THE ADVANCE.—It is certain that Napoleon did not contemplate having to go as far as Moscow or he would have started earlier in the year. It was not till June 24th that the centre crossed the Niemen at Kovno. At Vilna, only fifty miles on, a halt had to be made for fourteen days in order to let the long columns close up. There was no enemy in sight, but already the question of transport was causing difficulty. Ten thousand horses had perished for want of good grazing, so 100 guns and 500 wagons had to be left behind.

Jerome had been ordered to push forward against Bagration, but bad weather delayed his start, and Bagration, who had been ordered to retire (much against his will), was able to get away. Napoleon was very angry with Jerome, and recriminations led to the latter giving up his command and returning to his Kingdom of Westphalia. Probably he was glad to go; possibly other generals would have followed him had they dared to do so.

The French centre went on to Vitepsk, where another halt was necessary; then, hearing that the Russians had concentrated at Smolensk, Napoleon thought he would get his battle. The Russians, however, fought only a rear-guard action, and again retired.

Napoleon thought seriously of halting at Smolensk and making preparations to complete the campaign next year; but if he halted it would be a confession of failure; yet if he advanced he courted worse defeat. It was not yet late in the year (August 18th), he was within one month's march of Moscow, and he was convinced that the Russians must fight to defend their sacred city. So in spite of the difficulties, which were increasing from day to day, he determined to

go on. His conviction on this occasion was correct—the Russians had decided to give battle; the idea of giving up Moscow without a blow was too much for the army and the nation; Barclay was superseded, and the command was given to Kutusov.

BORODINO.—On September 7th the great battle took place. The Russians had prepared a position by throwing up earthworks, with the Great Redoubt in their centre. Napoleon hurled his columns against them in a purely frontal attack; it is said that he did not want to make any threat at the flanks for fear it might frighten Kutusov into further retreat. After an awful carnage, in which each side lost about 40,000 men, Kutusov drew off and left the road to Moscow open.

The Russians extol as heroes of the day Bagration, who was killed, and Barclay, who, though he had been superseded and his judgment overruled, remained to prove that he was at least no coward. On the French side Ney's valour earned for him the title of Prince of Moscow; Murat and Grouchy gained laurels for their cavalry attacks.

Napoleon himself was not at his best; there was no finesse in his tactics, and he has been criticised for not throwing in his reserves at the climax of the battle. Lord Wolsley thinks he had an attack of the malady, but there is little evidence in support of this. When in touch with the enemy Napoleon's custom was to have a quick meal about six o'clock and go to sleep till midnight. He then got up, read the latest reports, and issued orders for the day. At Borodino he mounted his horse at 2 a.m. By 4 p.m. he had spent fourteen continuous hours on his feet or on horseback in all the nerve-racking strain which a battle must entail, especially on a commander who relies only on his own judgment. As long as the issue was in any doubt his brain and his energy never slackened, but once the decision was in sight there was a natural reaction, both in mind and body, and it is possible that the strain and fatigue may have

brought on some kind of attack. But the eye-witnesses noticed nothing more than a cold.

MOSCOW.—On September 14th the Grand Army marched into the old capital of the Tsars and found it deserted. Next day began the great fire which destroyed most of the city, and the scene was made more lurid by the excesses of the troops, who broke all bonds of discipline, and gave themselves up to an orgy of drink and pillage. Russian authors deny that the fire was deliberately planned, and ascribe it to drunken pillagers. The French have asserted that they found many cellars stored with inflammable materials, and that the Russian Governor destroyed the fire-engines before he left. It was five days before the flames were got under and some sort of order was restored.

Napoleon was now convinced that Alexander would ask for peace, and eagerly awaited proposals. He even sent secret offers to Kutusov, suggesting that he was prepared to leave the Tsar a free hand both in Turkey and Poland. He was, in fact, even more eager to make peace than he had been at Tilsit; his one desire was to return to Paris with the stories of Borodino and the conquest of Moscow, which could be made sufficiently dazzling to cover up unpleasant details.

Alexander, however, had sworn an oath not to talk of peace while a French soldier remained on Russian soil, so Napoleon's hints were left unanswered. Legend says that a monk called Abel, who claimed the gift of prophecy, foretold the entry of a Russian army into Paris, and this strengthened the Tsar's resolution. He had sacrificed his army and his old capital, and could lose little more by holding out.

It would be interesting to know what went on in Napoleon's mind during the month of torture which followed. His conviction that the Russians would be bent to his will had to give way to fact; his infallibility was rudely shaken; his situation was growing worse day by day, while his enemy was growing stronger both in numbers and in the belief that the conqueror had failed. But winter was coming on,

and as Alexander made no sign there was nothing for it but to order a march homewards.

THE RETREAT.—On October 19th the retreat began. Napoleon intended to move by a more southerly road which had not been ravaged by war. He started with just 100,000 men, who were all that were left except a few garrisons in places like Smolensk. If even now the dangers had been seen complete disaster might have been avoided; all the transport should have been used for supplies, and in this way he could have marched much quicker and helped his stragglers. But he would abandon no guns, and his remaining wagons were piled with loot.

The first reverse came only a few days after the start. The leading French troops had a fight with Kutusov, who was barring the road. By the advice of his Marshals Napoleon did not press the attack, but turned northwards and took the old road by which he had advanced, and which, of course, was entirely devastated.

Worse trouble followed on November 6th, when the first snow fell. It has been proved that even before this date 20,000 stragglers had dropped out of the ranks, and when snow came on they were more numerous than ever.

THE BERESINA.—When the Beresina was reached on November 26th the bridge at Borissov was in the hands of the enemy, and a partial thaw had broken the ice into loose blocks. By moving five miles to the North a point was discovered where two trestle bridges could be thrown across, and this was done by the heroic labour of the engineers. On the 28th the troops began to cross. But the enemy was closing round, his army from Turkey was coming up from the South, and another army from Finland, and these were getting into touch with the cloud of Cossacks who hung on to the French rear; their guns now began to play on the bridges. During the day 28,000 French pushed their way across, but early next morning the bridges were destroyed to keep off the Russian pursuit, and thousands

of stragglers were left on the eastern bank, to be cut to pieces by the Cossacks.

All semblance of discipline now vanished. Small parties clung together for self-defence, and Ney earned immortal glory as the "bravest of the brave" in keeping together some sort of a rear-guard. But of the quarter of million Frenchmen who had crossed the Niemen less than 20,000 ever came back.

At Smorgoni on December 5th Napoleon deserted his army and fled to Paris, handing over the command to Murat, who followed his example a few days later. Prince Eugene led the remnant back through Prussia, and reached the Elbe at Magdeburg in March.

The Russians claim that they were the nation who defeated Napoleon, and the claim is just. It is true that Trafalgar was a tremendous blow, but it still left him Master of the Land. It is true that the Spaniards were the first to rise as a nation against him, and that the Peninsular War was a heavy drain on his resources. But in Russia he was not only checked, he was defeated; he not only lost his army, he lost his reputation for infallibility.

MALET CONSPIRACY.—Malet was an obscure but clever republican who conceived the idea of overthrowing the Empire by proclaiming the death of Napoleon. In October '12 he was in prison in Paris, but by means of cleverly forged documents he managed to escape; he then announced that Napoleon had been killed at Moscow and that he himself was now Governor of Paris. For a few hours he imposed on the officers in command of the troops, arrested Savery, Minister of Police, and took possession of some public offices. But on attempting to occupy the military Headquarters he was arrested, and next day was shot, together with two accomplices.

This extraordinary escapade was reported to Napoleon during the great retreat, and was one of the reasons which prompted his hurried return to the capital.

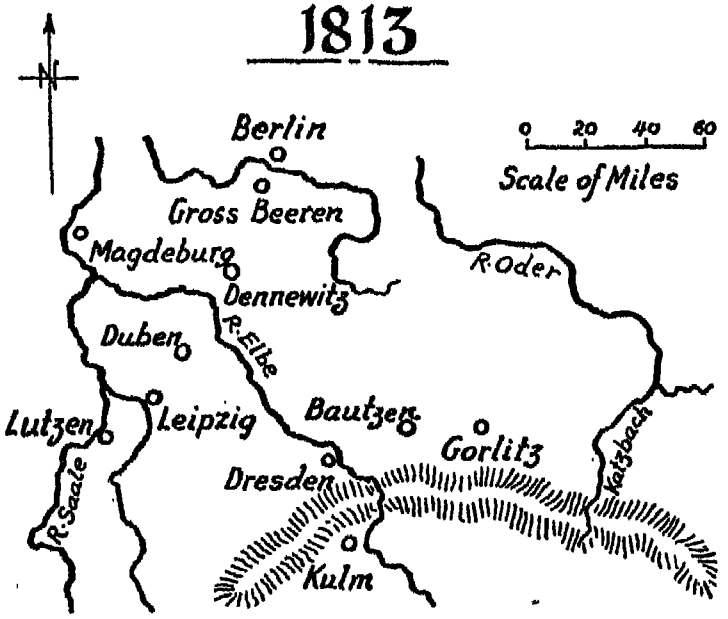
CHAPTER XX

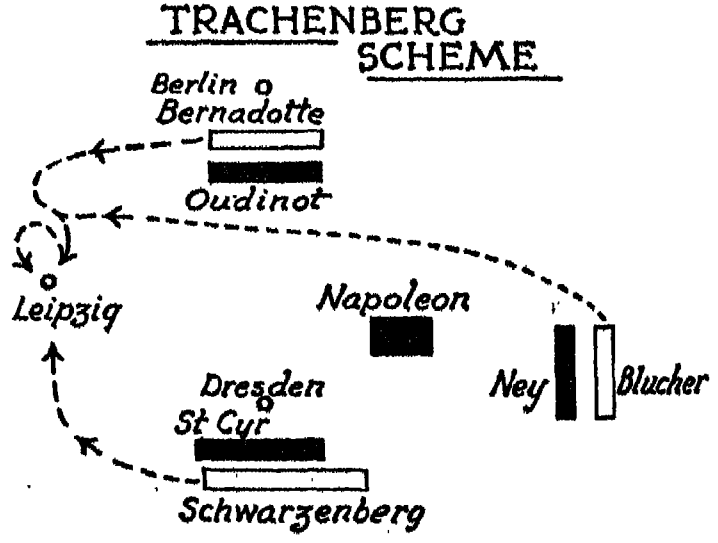
1813

It is not surprising to find that the reverse in Russia only spurred Napoleon to fresh endeavours—with a man of his temperament it could not be otherwise. Success had made him vain and ambitious, defeat made him vengeful and dangerous. Judging by the light of after-events, we are tempted to say that his situation was hopeless, but it was not so at the beginning of 1813, and we shall see that there were occasions when his genius very nearly gave him another triumph which would have restored all his former prestige. In Russia and Spain the forces of nature had been strong against him, but he himself had not yet been defeated in a pitched battle.

By April he had accomplished the marvellous feat of raising a new army of 300,000 men. To do this 30,000 of the best troops were brought from Spain, 100,000 men were mobilised from the National Guard, and the conscripts for the years '13 and '14 were called at once to the colours. His chief objects were to avoid fighting on French soil, to strengthen his hold on Prussia, and to relieve the garrisons he had left behind in fortresses like Danzig and Custrin.

SIXTH COALITION.—At first the Russians had no allies, but soon the Prussians, and later the Austrians, joined them. On their side the war was not to support the renown of an individual; it was a movement of the masses. It was not only retaliation for the defeats of their armies, it was to avenge material wrongs, the destruction of towns and villages, the enormous levies of supplies and money, and the


1813
Berlin
Gross Beeren
Magdeburg
Dennewitz
Duben
R. Elbe
Lutzen
Leipzig
Bautzen
Dresden
Gorlitz
Kulm
R. Saale
R. Oder
Katzbach
0 20 40 60
Scale of Miles


TRACHENBERG SCHEME
Berlin
Bernadotte
Oudinot
Leipzig
Napoleon
Ney
Blucher
Dresden
St Cyr
Schwarzenberg

grinding exactions of the Continental System. The nations were ready before their rulers.

Frederick William was hesitating for some time. The patriotic Queen had died broken-hearted in 1810. The little Kingdom of Prussia was barely one-tenth of Napoleon's huge Empire; experience of Alexander at Tilsit had warned the King not to trust too far to allies; Metternich at Vienna was still seeking to gain profit by subservience to Napoleon. But the nation was too strong for him, and Yorck was the first to raise a banner of revolt against the tyrant. Throughout '12 Yorck had commanded a force of Prussians in Napoleon's left wing; in December he made a private agreement with the Russians, and received an official rebuke from Frederick William; but his action roused the nation to enthusiasm, and the King could hesitate no longer. He found his army, not only eager for war, but also much stronger than might have been expected. The brain of Scharnhorst had conceived the scheme of short service which has since been adopted in most continental nations; Napoleon had imposed a condition that Prussia should not keep more than 42,000 men under arms; Scharnhorst carried out the letter of this, but as soon as his first batch were trained he drafted them into the reserve and trained a fresh lot. By this means the 42,000 kept on multiplying, and by the beginning of '13 he had 120,000 ready for immediate service, while tens of thousands of volunteers were rushing to join.

The Russians had been following up the French and had 100,000 men on the Elbe in April. On the map it looks as if the distance from Moscow to the Elbe were the same as from the Elbe to Moscow, but from the point of view of an army it is not so. Napoleon had found the country more inhospitable with every mile he went; the Russians, going the other way, found the roads improving, the supplies more plentiful, and friendly towns where they could leave their sick to recover and their stragglers to rest.

They could not repeat on this occasion the strategic retreat of the year before, because that would allow Napoleon to rescue his garrisons in the Prussian fortresses, to re-establish his prestige, and, most important of all, to interfere with the patriotic movement in Prussia. Therefore the advanced troops of the Allies, the Prussians under Blucher and the Russians under Wittgenstein, amounting to 80,000, moved forward and crossed the Elbe. This made Saxony the theatre of war.

THE MANŒUVRES.—Napoleon had hurried back from Paris with his fresh troops, and the first encounter was at Lutzen, fifteen miles South-west of Leipzig, on May 2nd. After a fierce battle, in which each side lost nearly 10,000 men, the two armies bivouacked on the field, but the Allies retired next day, and Napoleon was able to claim victory. He tried to raise his own prestige and the spirits of his conscripts by declaring that Lutzen was another Austerlitz or Jena. Bessieres had been killed by a stray shot, and Scharnhorst was mortally wounded.

Napoleon went on to Dresden, where he insisted on the unwilling Saxons joining him, and Dresden became the centre of operations for the next five months.

But at first Napoleon continued his march eastward, hoping, as ever, for a decisive battle. On May 20th the Allies made a stand on a prepared position at Bautzen. Napoleon attacked with 140,000 against 82,000, and on the first day he drove the enemy back; but he had not sufficient cavalry to turn the defeat into a rout, so the Allies took up a second line and fought again the next day. On this occasion Ney was sent on a detour to get round the enemy on the North, but though he turned their flank and defeated the Prussian right, he failed to push on so as to cut off the whole army; the Allies retired again without losing guns or prisoners. Lord Wolseley thinks that through Ney's failure Napoleon missed a complete and decisive victory. "Indeed, it is hardly possible to doubt that he would have

almost regained at a blow his former position in Europe; the whole available force of the Russians and Prussians would have been broken up; Austria, which was waiting to see which way victory inclined, would have held back from the alliance against him."

These two successes at Lutzen and Bautzen were sufficient to show that Napoleon was still formidable in the field, and Barclay, who was now reinstated in command of the Russians, was anxious to retire into Poland. The Prussians begged him to hold on, and before the question was settled Napoleon himself proposed an armistice, to which the Allies willingly agreed; from June 4th to August 10th negotiations went on.

THE ARMISTICE.—It is generally considered that Napoleon made a mistake in suspending operations at this moment, and Lord Wolseley thinks that this was the turning-point of his career; I believe he had passed the turning-point many years earlier, but he certainly had an opportunity *revocare gradum* if he had been reasonable enough to accept it. Very generous terms were offered, which would have allowed him to keep Italy, Belgium, and Holland, but he refused to give up Spain or anything else, and his private correspondence shows that he simply wanted time to improve his army. He especially wanted to raise more cavalry, and succeeded in bringing them up to 50,000 sabres; other reinforcements made his total strength up to nearly 400,000.

During the first days of the armistice he had hopes that he could bribe or threaten Austria into joining him, but negotiations had scarcely begun when on June 30th news was received of Wellington's decisive victory at Vittoria, and any chance of peace that might ever have existed fell to the ground. The excitement in the Allied camps was intense, and even the most cautious were infected with enthusiasm.

The man who held the scales was Metternich. Ever

since the beginning of the year this astute diplomat had been watching the events which promised to raise Austria from her distress to the post of arbiter of Europe. He began by offering to act as peacemaker; then he strengthened his position by mobilising the Austrian army, and this force looked strong enough to turn the scale if thrown into one balance or the other. Vittoria helped Metternich to make up his mind—if, indeed, he had not already done so.

For another six weeks the negotiations dragged on, and form a pretty chapter in diplomatic history, but as they led to nothing it is unnecessary to follow them. Napoleon would not listen to the terms offered, so war was resumed on Aug. 11th. Austria and Sweden joined the Coalition, and sent armies commanded by Schwarzenberg and Bernadotte.

Napoleon's chief hope now lay in the divided counsels of the Allied statesmen and generals, and he was not far wrong in looking on the Sixth Coalition as a tangled knot. Though there were many counsellors, there was no chief who could make a decision or issue orders that would bind the others. The Tsar considered that as he was the man who had defeated Napoleon he ought to be the acknowledged leader; but his generals were cautious. Frederick William was cautious, but his generals were hot-headed. Bernadotte wanted to be appointed Commander-in-Chief. Metternich thought that as he held the scales he could get his way. In the end, however, the diplomats agreed to leave painful questions alone till they finished with Napoleon, and so the knot was held together.

THE TRACHENBERG SCHEME.—Meanwhile the generals, after many councils of war, had succeeded in agreeing on one really good plan; this is known as the Trachenberg Scheme, taking its name from a castle near Breslau, where it was discussed. Barclay represented the Russians, Blucher the Prussians, Schwarzenberg the Austrians, and Bernadotte the Swedes. The last-named brought with him Moreau, the victor of Hohenlinden, who

returned from his exile in America to lend his aid against Napoleon. He and Bernadotte knew as much of Napoleon's System as anybody; they saw how he would use his central position; they knew his brilliant power on the field of battle—and the problem was how to counter it.

The Trachenberg Scheme was clear and effective, and was by far the best strategy that was ever opposed to Napoleon. It was based on the simple principle of baiting a bear or a badger. The Allies had three armies in a semi-circle; Napoleon was sure to concentrate and attack *one* of them; this one was to retire without giving battle, and draw Napoleon on; meanwhile the other two were bound to attack at once, thus cutting in behind him, threatening Dresden and the French communications. In fact, they were all bound to run away from Napoleon himself, but were bound to attack his lieutenants whenever they could. The bearskins of the Guard would always indicate the position of the Emperor. The sketch on page 232 shows the initial positions. On the whole, the scheme worked well and kept Napoleon puzzled. Bernadotte and Schwarzenberg have been blamed for overcaution, but this seems unjust. If Napoleon could get *one* decisive victory the scheme would fall to the ground; their first object, therefore, must be to avoid defeat and wear him out. This was what actually happened.

DRESDEN.—Napoleon intended to make his first attack on Schwarzenberg; but, as the impetuous Blucher had already got into touch with Ney, he changed his mind and took his Guard eastwards; he now had 140,000 against 100,000. In accordance with the scheme, Blucher fell back, hoping to draw Napoleon on while Schwarzenberg attacked Dresden. Napoleon got news of this latter movement in time to take his Guard back by forced marches to reinforce St. Cyr for the defence of Dresden, and a tremendous battle took place there on Aug. 26th and 27th. Schwarzenberg had worked through the mountains round

to the South-west, and appeared before the city on the 25th; had he attacked at once he might have taken it, but he delayed till the following day. In the meantime Napoleon arrived. On the 26th the allied attack was made and failed; on the 27th the Emperor had collected sufficient force to take the offensive in his turn. Heavy rain drenched the troops, turned the muddy roads into streams, and made the muskets useless. In these circumstances Napoleon decided to make use of cavalry, and, while the guns were thundering at each other along the centre, Murat took his cavalry round the allied left and decided the battle by heavy charges. Schwarzenberg drew off after losing 30,000 men. Moreau was killed by a cannon-ball while standing by the side of the Tsar.

Napoleon issued orders for pursuit, and relied very much on Vandamme's corps, which he had sent round to Kulm, hoping it would cut off the allied retreat and make the victory decisive. He himself, drenched and worn out, returned to Dresden; again there is mention of the malady. But in his absence the pursuit was relaxed, so the Allies had time to pull themselves together and overwhelm Vandamme, thus getting some consolation for their defeat.

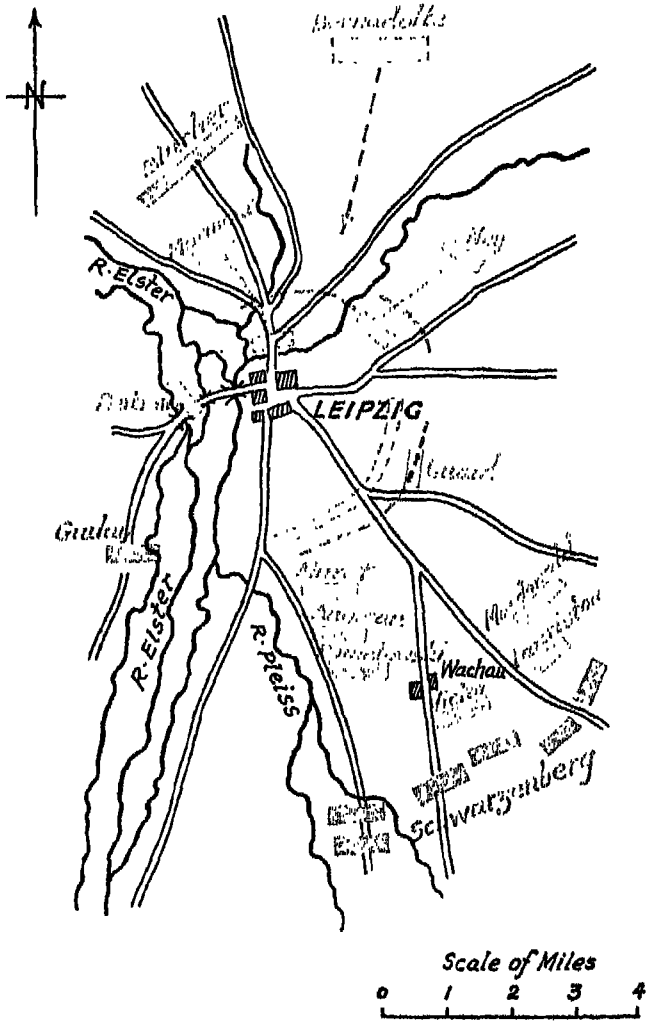
Meantime Blucher turned on the French and drove them across the Katzbach with heavy loss. At the same time Oudinot was severely defeated by Bernadotte at Gross Beeren. Ney was sent to supersede Oudinot, but on Sept. 6th, he too, was beaten at Dennewitz.

Thus, though Napoleon himself had secured a victory at Dresden, his lieutenants had been crushed at Kulm, Gross Beeren, Katzbach, and Dennewitz, and his forces were crumbling under these blows. He tried to remedy matters by a dash against Blucher, but the Prussian withdrew, and again Napoleon was recalled by threats against Dresden. Twice more he attempted to strike, but the Allies eluded him.

By the beginning of September a fresh Russian army had arrived, and the Prussians had received reinforcements. It

BATTLE OF LEIPZIG

Positions on Oct 16th — Allies
Positions on Oct 17th 18th



was therefore decided that the Allies were strong enough to make a movement against Napoléon himself. Blucher marched to join Bernadotte, and the plan was that they should come down on the French rear from the North, while Schwarzenberg came from the South; Leipzig was the point at which both should aim.

Napoleon for the first time in his life was thrown on the defensive; he ordered a concentration of all his forces back at Leipzig except two corps, which were left to hold Dresden. LEIPZIG.—"The Battle of the Nations" is regarded as one of the decisive battles in the history of the world.

The Allies, who totalled over 300,000, included Austrians Russians, Prussians, and Swedes; there was a handful of British, who brought a rocket battery which seems to have had some moral effect; there was even a party of Tartars with bows and arrows, the last time these weapons were seen on a European battle-field—the French called these bowmen *Les Amours*.

Throughout the three days of desperate fighting the French, who numbered 190,000 struggled with magnificent valour, and only lost a little ground. Torrents of rain again drenched the troops, and hunger added to their misery. On the second day Bernadotte, who had been hanging back in spite of urgent appeals, at last came into the battle. On the third day the Saxons and Wurtembergers, who had been with Ney, went over to the Allies. The carnage was awful; the French lost 40,000 and the Allies 60,000.

Napoleon could not afford such casualties, and his enemies had closed round him so densely that wherever he turned he found himself outnumbered. On the evening of Oct. 18th he saw that even his one remaining line of retreat might be cut off if he delayed longer, so orders were issued to retire.

On the 19th a rear-guard under Poniatowski and Macdonald made a stubborn defence, while the other troops filed through the narrow streets of the town to the single bridge

which led over the swollen river Elster. Arrangements had been made to blow up the bridge, and a corporal of engineers was left to fire the mine. Alarmed by the appearance of some Cossacks, this corporal demolished the bridge while the rear-guard and thousands of stragglers were still in the town. This was the final disaster, which cost Napoleon 30,000 men and 250 guns. Macdonald escaped by swimming. Poniatowski forced his horse into the water and was drowned. There was now nothing for it but a retreat into France. With a remnant of 40,000 Napoleon made his way back, brushing aside some Bavarians who got in his way at Hanau, near Mainz. The Allies spent a couple of months in forcing French garrisons to surrender before they followed him across the Rhine.

Napoleon had been fairly beaten by the allied generals. From the first they were forcing him to conform to their movements; his ceaseless marches and counter-marches are proof of this. He had longed for a decisive battle, but they only allowed him to have it when the odds were in their own favour. Then he fought unwisely at Leipzig, with a river at his back—a case of Friedland reversed.

He had lost another quarter of a million men in this campaign, also 1,000 guns. One hundred and ninety thousand men were left cooped up in fortresses, which all surrendered except Davoust in Hamburg and Rapp in Danzig. He lost many of his closest adherents; Murat, his own brother-in-law, went over to the Austrians. Bavaria, Wurtemburg, and Saxony all turned against him. An insurrection broke out in Holland.

He had lost all power in Germany, and was now to fight in defence of France. On reaching Paris he called for a levy of 300,000, but only got 135,000; after leaving garrisons in Paris and on the northern frontier, he found himself with 85,000 for his army in the field—to oppose nearly half a million Allies.

CHAPTER XXI

1814

THE INVASION OF FRANCE.—Leipzig ought to have completed the harmony between the nations who had combined to win that great victory, but this was far from being the case.

The Emperor Francis had no wish to dethrone his son-in-law, but he wanted to recover the provinces he had lost; he therefore hoped that Napoleon would accept terms and end the war. The Prussian extremists, of whom Blucher was typical, wanted to shoot Napoleon. The Tsar would not forego the sweet revenge of an entry into Paris, but after that he was prepared to pose as a chivalrous conqueror. In hopes of finding a common policy, the allied monarchs instituted a Diplomatic Council, first at Frankfort and later at Chatillon, forty miles South-east of Troyes. Records of its meetings show that if the English Minister Castlereagh had not arrived to bring a steadying influence the Coalition might have fallen to pieces even when within sight of Paris.

Napoleon was very well aware of this. By invitation of his enemies he sent Caulaincourt to represent him at Chatillon, and while he himself was fighting against the allied armies his Minister was arguing with their diplomats.

The terms of the allies became more and more severe as time went on, and in the end they offered him France such as she had been in the last days of the Bourbons. Thiers has devoted many pages (Vol. xviii.) to the Diplomatic War, and, like a good Frenchman, denounces these terms as indecent and humiliating. "If it would be necessary to abandon all the acquistions made by France since 1790, Napoleon's determination to perish, though his ruin should

involve that of thousands of men, was more consonant with his real glory and the true interests of France." We may leave it to Frenchmen to decide where the interests of their country lay. But the other nations had interests of their own which Thiers scarcely appreciates; Prussia had been robbed of half her territory and wanted to get it back; Austria had lost Lombardy and the Adriatic coast, and wanted to get them back. They did not ask Napoleon to abandon a single Frenchman to a foreign ruler, but they refused to allow him to rule over millions of Germans, Italians, Belgians, Dutch, and Spaniards.

Their chief point, published in a proclamation at Frankfort, was that they were not warring against France, but against Napoleon, the Emperor; though they invaded France, it was not to annex any portion inhabited by Frenchmen, but to recover those portions of the Empire inhabited by other nations. In fact, they wanted to differentiate between the Empire and the Kingdom.

Though many Frenchmen had begun to doubt the benefits of Napoleon's rule, their pride was aroused by the invasion, and on the whole he was well supported. As Thiers says, "It was Napoleon who had exposed us to these humiliations, but a criminal who defends his native land becomes identical with the soil for which he fights."

STRATEGY.—Many of the military authors who have made the cult of Napoleon into a religion regard the campaign of 1814 as the masterpiece of war. As much as any of them I admire some of Napoleon's achievements, but in this case I confess myself a heretic, or, rather, as is usual with heretics, I accuse the other side of worshipping false gods. Napoleon was false to his own great principles; by all his words and deeds he had shown that his strategy was based on collecting the *greatest possible* numbers for his offensive mass, disregarding everything except the decisive point. In 1805 he beat the Allies by concentrating while

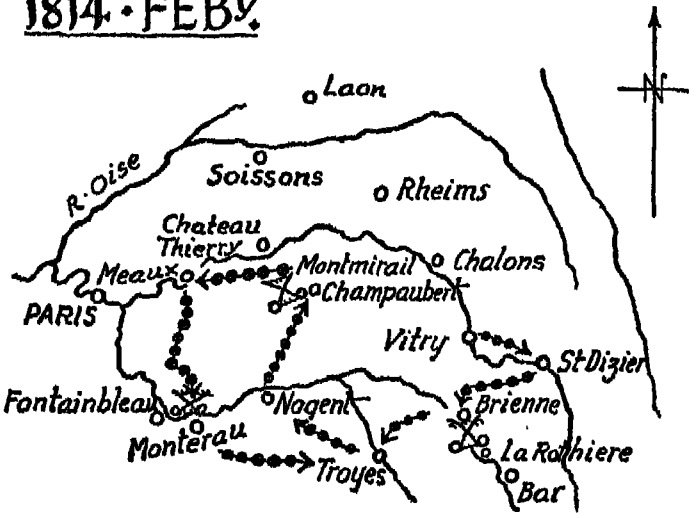
they "saw too many things" and dispersed their forces. In 1814 it was Napoleon himself who saw too many things; he saw Spain, and left 100,000 good troops in that country; he saw Italy, and left 30,000 there; he saw Antwerp, Metz, Verdun, and other fortresses. It has been argued that the garrisons in these places consisted chiefly of wounded and invalids who could not march; also that if the army had been recalled from Spain Wellington would have advanced into the heart of France. But on the other side there is a damning fact; later on he did call on all these forces, and it was too late. Napoleon, whose boast it was that his foresight and decision had defeated Mack the unready, was now too late—a terrible charge against a strategist. In other directions he was too late. Hoping to be able to withdraw his troops from Italy and Spain, he proposed to send back the Pope and Prince Ferdinand to those countries, but these last-hour efforts at conciliation came to nothing.

The truth is that the Emperor, whose vanity would not allow him to abandon one inch of his Empire, overruled the General, who ought to have known better. His strategy consisted in gambling for a *coup*.

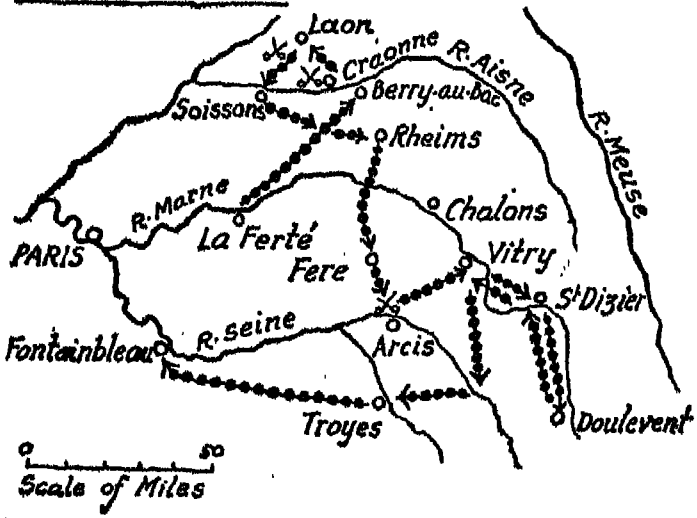
The immediate theatre of operations was in the valleys of the Marne and Seine, which converge towards Paris. Within these limits the General accomplished great things; his will-power forced the troops to feats of marching and fighting which no other general would have dared to demand; for two months he perplexed his opponents and held at bay immensely superior numbers. In fact, as a leader he commands unbounded admiration and has never been excelled. But this is a thing apart from strategy. If the problem is considered as it presented itself to him at the time, the solution (another heresy) appears rather obvious, like the "Key to Toulon."

There were two armies against him. The bigger, 160,000 under Schwarzenberg, was double the size of anything he could oppose to it; it advanced by the southern line along

1814 · FEBY.



1814 · MARCH ·



the valley of the Seine. Schwarzenberg had shown himself slow and cautious in '13, but he kept his troops together, and was not likely to make a mistake through over-eagerness; therefore he must be detained by sudden threats and alarms. The other army (60,000) was under Blucher; its operations were chiefly in the valley of the Marne: old Marshal Vorwarts had boasted that he would be the first to enter Paris, and in spite of the wise counsels of his Chief of Staff, Gneisenau, he might outrun his Allies and give Napoleon a chance; and if Blucher were defeated the Austrians would not fight on alone.

If we keep in mind that these points were well known to Napoleon, it is hard to see what other course was open to him except the one that he took. That is to say, he detained Schwarzenberg by playing on his nerves, and watched for Blucher's mistakes. For two months he was most successful, and very nearly brought off a *coup* such as he desired, but the odds were just a little too heavy against him.

THE MANŒUVRES.—The Coalition was invading France from North, South, and East. In the South Wellington was pushing Soult towards Toulouse. In the North Bernadotte was occupying Holland and Belgium. On the eastern frontier Schwarzenberg crossed the Rhine at Basle and moved towards the valley of the Seine, while Blucher crossed at Mainz and marched to join him. These last two armies were the ones which confronted Napoleon himself, and immediately threatened Paris.

To oppose them the Emperor placed his centre at Vitry, with a right wing (15,000) under Mortier at Troyes, and his left (15,000) under Macdonald at Chalons. He swung his centre up and down to hit the two opposing armies in turn, and the sketches show his dazzling changes of direction throughout February and March.

Towards the end of January he heard that Blucher was approaching St. Dizier, and he marched in that direction, to cut in between the Prussians and the Austrians, who were

farther South. Blucher, however, had already passed St. Dizier on his way to Brienne. Napoleon followed, and at the town where he had once fought schoolboy battles with snowballs he now fought for the first time on French soil. Blucher was beaten, but this only threw him back to La Rothière, where he joined Schwarzenberg, and the two of them stood to fight. Napoleon, thinking he had only Blucher in front of him, accepted battle at La Rothière on Feb. 1st, and was driven back towards Troyes with heavy loss.

Blucher was much elated by this success, and proposed that he should move on Paris by the valley of the Marne, hoping to be the first to reach the French capital; Schwarzenberg was to march down the Seine, and was probably relieved to find himself free from his hot-headed ally.

Blucher's eagerness led to his long column being strung out in three sections, head, body, and tail, and his cunning adversary was quick to take advantage of such a mistake. By a rapid march northwards from Nogent Napoleon struck the body at Champaubert on the 10th. After crushing a whole division there, he followed the head, beat it severely at Montmirail on the 11th, and drove it across the Marne at Chateau Thierry next day. Then he turned on the tail, which was under Blucher himself, and threw it back on Chalons. These four days, which are often bunched together as "Montmirail," were real triumphs. Blucher had lost 30,000 men, and appeared to be harmless for some time to come.

But meanwhile Schwarzenberg, spurred on by the Tsar, was wobbling along towards Paris, and his van-guard had reached Fontainebleau. Napoleon, therefore, left a detaining force on the Marne while he hurried his main body southward to the Seine. After some heavy fighting, especially at Montereau on Feb. 17th, he frightened the Austrians into retiring as far as Bar.

Montereau was another triumph for Napoleon, who had

now repulsed each of the opposing armies in turn, and raised the spirits of his weary troops. His admirers have every reason to extol his achievements as a tactician and leader of men.

THE DEATH STRUGGLE.—But if these brilliant ten days show the leader at his best, they also show the Man against Destiny at his very worst. His ignorance—call it self-deception—was appalling, and the pride that comes before a fall was at its most arrogant height.

Did he think the courage of his foes would fail them? It is true that the early Coalitions had been weak, but his own blows had hammered the present Alliance together. Would such men as the Tsar, Blucher, the Iron Duke, be discouraged when the Allies had still enormous reserves in hand? Each of them had shown himself undismayed in worse times than these—the Tsar at Austerlitz, Blucher after Jena, Wellington in his long struggle against odds in Spain.

Napoleon would have been justified in fighting on if the invaders had been a horde of barbarians intent on sacking Paris and ravaging the country. But this was not the case. His enemies were prepared to treat him better than he had treated Prussia, Spain, and Portugal; in fact, they only wanted to get back what he had taken from them. At this very moment an opportunity was given to save his dynasty, keeping France intact and sparing the lives of his men—and this when Montmirail and Montereau had restored his fame as a soldier.

Caulaincourt, who was doing his utmost at Chatillon, had gained the admiration and sympathy of all the Allies. Metternich urged him in the most friendly way to save the Bonaparte dynasty by accepting terms, and warned him that if they were not accepted they would not be offered again. The devoted Caulaincourt implored his master to listen to reason, and his despatch with details of the terms reached Headquarters the day after Montereau.

Napoleon's reply was dated Feb. 19th: "I feel so excited by the infamous proposals you have sent me that I

feel myself dishonoured by having placed myself in a position where such proposals could be made to you."

Still more violent was his language to several generals who had failed to satisfy his very exacting demands. He degraded Victor from command of the Guard; the unhappy Marshal, who had just seen his own son-in-law killed at his side, begged with tears to be allowed to carry a musket in the ranks, and the Emperor relented so far as to give him a minor command. Augerau, who was trying to collect an army at Lyons, got a letter full of stinging rebuke. Others were reprimanded in language which showed no trace of gratitude for their past services. It may seem curious that these outbursts of temper occurred at this time, when success might have inclined him to generosity, or at least to justice, but very likely it was not so much their mistakes which roused his anger as the hopelessness, and perhaps the pity for himself, which he read in their reports and in their eyes.

The man who had been Dictator of Europe would not be content with ruling the fair realm of France, and his vanity goaded him on to gamble for something more.

To return to the operations. Blucher had recovered more quickly than could have been expected, and reinforcements brought his strength up to 48,000. He came southward to help Schwarzenberg, and proposed that they should make a joint attack. When he found that his ally preferred to retire he was furious, and went back North again to meet further reinforcements who were coming from Bernadotte. He hoped these would make him strong enough to advance on Paris without help from the other army.

Schwarzenberg had gone as far as Bar, and was prepared to go farther. Napoleon could not follow without leaving Paris open to Blucher; but as he thought he had frightened the Austrians out of action for some time, he decided to go North again to see whether Blucher would give him another chance. On March 2nd he was at La Ferté, on the Marne.

On this day Blucher was in some difficulty. His road

northwards was blocked by Soissons, which was in the hands of the French, while Marmont and Napoleon were coming up behind him. But the Commander of Soissons (by name Moreau, no relation of the general) surrendered very tamely, so Blucher passed through the town without fighting, and met Bulow and Winzingerode, who had brought their corps from Bernadotte's army to join him.

Thiers states emphatically that the surrender of Soissons was, next to Waterloo, the most fatal event in French history. Blucher was hemmed up against the unfordable river Aisne, separated from his allies and threatened by a superior force. Thiers takes this view from Napoleon himself, who was trying to throw the blame for his own misfortunes on the shoulders of anybody and everybody else. No doubt Moreau's action was weak, and perhaps Napoleon believed at the moment that it was fatal. But the facts show that Blucher was not in such danger as is represented; he was not dependent on the one bridge at Soissons; there was a second at Berry-au-Bac; and to make sure of his crossing he had thrown yet another bridge across between the two towns. At the moment when Soissons was given up Napoleon was still at La Ferté, thirty-five miles away, and therefore Blucher was not closely pressed. The surrender certainly made things easy for him, but Soissons was not the only road to salvation.

Napoleon crossed the Aisne at Berry-au-Bac. On the 7th Blucher, who had taken up a position at Craonne, was attacked and defeated after a desperate fight. On the 9th another attack was made at Laon, but this time it was repulsed, and Blucher's position was so strong that even Napoleon did not dare to renew the assault. Sullenly he fell back to Soissons, and thence turned eastwards to Rheims; at this place he destroyed a Russian division which allowed itself to be surprised.

Once again Schwarzenberg had begun to move forward, and got as far as Troyes; once again Napoleon swung

southwards to meet him. The bridge at Arcis was in French hands, and Oudinot was ordered to bring all the troops on the Seine to join the main body there. But while Napoleon had only 20,000 men on the spot he was attacked by Schwarzenberg's very superior numbers, and had to retire, destroying the bridge behind him. He then moved towards Vitry on March 21st.

It was at this moment that Napoleon started on his last and most desperate plan. He would collect every available man and make a dash eastward; he would relieve Verdun and Metz (which were being besieged), and their garrisons would raise his forces to 120,000; he would then threaten the rear of the enemy; the timid Schwarzenberg would retire at once; thus Paris would be relieved—and anything might happen. Starting with only 40,000 men, he marched by Vitry to St. Dizier, where he captured a big convoy of stores; then, pushing on south-eastwards, he reached Doulevent on March 24th.

But here we have another proof that his strategy no longer paralysed his opponents as of yore. So far from conforming to his movements, the Allies decided that as the road to Paris seemed open they would join hands and push straight ahead, paying no heed to threats at their communications. Winzingerode, with 10,000 Russian horse, was sent to follow Napoleon and conceal the movement of the Allies, while Blucher and Schwarzenberg headed straight for Paris.

As a matter of fact, the cautious Austrian had very little to say in this decision. Napoleon's dash had at least frightened the diplomats; the Emperor Francis had no desire to fall into the arms of his son-in-law, so he fled to Dijon, taking Metternich with him; the latter had always been ready to counsel retreat when Schwarzenberg was in any difficulty. But, now that they had fled, Schwarzenberg found himself at the mercy of the Tsar and Blucher. A letter from Napoleon to his wife was intercepted, and revealed his new plan. Others letters from Paris showed

In France it was natural that there should be elements of discord which could only be cured by time. The heroes of the Grand Army who began to return from foreign prisons got little welcome from the Bourbons and their partisans. The peasants trembled at the prospect of losing their land, and wiser men than Louis XVIII would have found difficulty in satisfying the various interests involved.

It is difficult to say when Napoleon began his plans for a return to France, but he watched the progress of affairs, which all seemed to be preparing the way for him. Again he had to wait until the pear was ripe; that is to say, he had to give time for the allied armies to be demobilised and for the Russians to tramp a couple of thousands of miles homeward; also he had to give time for the incapacity and folly of the Bourbons to ripen. This did not take long, for on Feb. 20th, 1815, news was received of a military plot against Louis XVIII which seemed to show that the army was ready for revolt.

THE HUNDRED DAYS.—On Feb. 26th Napoleon embarked with about a thousand men, and, evading without difficulty the very careless supervision of the Allies and royalists, landed in France on March 1st. At first they received no encouragement from the men of Provence as they moved northwards. When the little band was approaching Grenoble they found a battalion barring the road. For a moment the issue hung in the balance as the royalists and the Guard faced each other. Then the daring adventurer stepped forward and exposed himself alone. "Soldiers, if there is one among you who desires to kill his Emperor he can do so." The answer was a mighty shout of "Vive l'Empereur," and the army was his own again.

After this dramatic scene there was no more opposition; his force was swollen by several garrisons, which joined it on the road, and the triumphal advance sent the Bourbon party scurrying to Belgium. Napoleon entered Paris on March 25th.

But though the army was prepared to follow him and regain the glory which the last two years had smirched, the country was weary, and the prospect of another war filled the hearts of men and women with dismay. Napoleon himself was no longer the hero of Brumaire, who had been hailed as a deliverer. In those early days there was no unhappy past to make men distrustful; he had promised them liberty, a word which means very different things in the mouths of different men, and before they saw what his idea of liberty was he had dazzled their eyes with glory. Now, however, experience warned them not to be caught in the same way again. A paper constitution, which offered some half-measures, was accepted by some people at a heavy discount and by others at no value at all. Theatrical efforts were made to arouse the old enthusiasm; at the "Champs de Mai" the imperial eagles were presented to the troops, and Napoleon took an oath to observe the constitution which he himself had made. But the effect was flat.

There is no doubt that, at least for the moment, he wanted to give his people the peace they so anxiously desired. But here again the past rose up against him. Twelve years of war is not a good record for a would-be peace-maker; the Allies had little faith in the man who had in turn signed peace with England, friendship with the Tsar, a family alliance with the Hapsburgs, and a dozen other treaties. It may be true that his enemies had done their share in tearing those documents up, but of course the Allies did not think so.

As Vandal says, "Toute alliance nait de haine partagée." The hatred was so intense that it quite eclipsed the private quarrels of the last ten months. The Allies embraced each other with fresh fervour and prepared to renew the war.

Perhaps Napoleon found it a relief to turn from the cold suspicion of Paris and the Council Chamber to the bracing atmosphere of camp. On June 12th he started to take his place once more at the head of the army.

CHAPTER XXIII

WATERLOO

THE campaign of Waterloo has, of course, more interest for us than any other; we like to read of the men who made history there.

But apart from all historic and sentimental interest it is of real value to the military student. There are people who think the study of such bygone days is useless, even dangerous; we ought to read of battles where all the weapons of modern science come into play. As regards tactics, this is true to a great extent; there are a few good old rules which are eternal, but they are very broad ones: "A blow on a flank is more severe than a blow in front"; "Success at the decisive point means success everywhere"; and so forth. But the details of tactics are of little value; to reduce the argument to the absurd, we need not worry about the formation of a cavalry charge, or whether the men stood three deep or four deep in a square.

Yet, though science alters many factors from day to day, there are two which it cannot affect—human legs and human minds. In reading history we see how big minds faced big situations; even genius may lose its way in the fog of war; in one case hesitation loses a golden opportunity, in another precipitancy rushes into disaster; orders are misread; accidents are frequent.

Nowhere does the human factor, in all its strength and weakness, come more into play than in the campaign of Waterloo.

And it possesses another advantage—its story is brief and simple. It only lasted four days; there is no need to cram the brain with masses of figures, dates, names, and places. The facts can be reduced to a few pages, yet they give rise to problems which have not been exhausted in

scores of volumes. It is profitable to think about them, for these same old problems will crop up again in the next war.

THE FRENCH FORCES.—Napoleon had at his disposal over 200,000 men, but it was necessary to send some troops to subdue royalists in La Vendée and elsewhere. The actual numbers he took into the campaign were 123,000.

The rank and file were brave and enthusiastic. There was a very large proportion of veterans, who had lately been prisoners in England and Germany, but had been released in 1814. These were the best troops of any of the armies; whatever mistakes may have been made, and whatever disasters occurred, the French soldiers were magnificent, and Napoleon's defeat was not due to any fault on their part.

The subordinate officers were good, but the highest ranks have been severely criticised. The French author Houssaye has devoted many pages to a description of the senior ranks, and it is a sad account; they were jealous and distrustful of each other, sometimes quarrelsome; they did not inspire confidence in their followers. The memories of '14 had burnt into their souls; they could not forget Napoleon's boasts, which had been so loud right up to his abdication; nor could they forget the curses and taunts which he had heaped on them. Nobody had suggested that they were not doing their best; they offered their lives in Napoleon's service, but they could not offer a faith which did not exist. They feared no enemy, but they feared Napoleon himself, and this made them nervous when not actually engaged in fighting; instead of using their judgment, they avoided responsibility by tying themselves down to the letter of the orders they received.

The staff work was bad. Berthier had gone off with Louis XVIII, but later it appears that he wished to return to Napoleon; at Bamberg, on June 1st, he fell from a window and was killed—it was generally supposed to be

suicide. Davoust was available, but he was the only man who could be trusted to act as Minister of War; his powers of organisation did wonders at Paris, but he was badly missed in the field.

In the end Soult was appointed Chief of Staff. He had little experience of such work, and was inefficient in drafting orders and also in sending them out. In this respect, however, Napoleon was no worse off than Wellington. Undoubtedly the most capable staff officer in the war was the Prussian, Gneisenau; but owing to his distrust of Wellington he did not back up Blucher with any enthusiasm.

THE DUKE'S MEN.—Wellington had about 100,000 men, of whom one-third were British, the remainder Dutch, Belgians, Hanoverians, and Brunswickers. They were organised into two corps, 1st under the Prince of Orange, 2nd under Lord Hill; the cavalry were under Lord Uxbridge, and there was a reserve under Wellington himself. There were very few veterans, but the traditions of the Peninsula gave them a steadiness against which the valour of France hurled itself in vain.

The staff work was bad, but this was due to inexperience, there were no arguments or recriminations.

THE PRUSSIANS.—Blucher had about 120,000, in four corps of about 30,000 each, 1st Ziethen, 2nd Pirch, 3rd Thielman, 4th Bulow. They were all Prussians except a few Saxons. With the exception of the latter, who did not behave well, they were good troops.

Though the two armies were independent of each other, nothing could have been more admirable than the co-operation between the two chiefs. Blucher, seventy-three years of age, was the most loyal ally and the most undefeatable enemy in history. But his loyalty would have been useless unless the Duke had trusted in it. Wellington, forty-six years of age, was cool, and his tactics in battle were superb.

THE ALLIED SCHEME.—The plans of the Allies were governed by the fact that the Austrians (250,000) and the

Russians (150,000) were marching on the Rhine, but could not be expected to cross it before July 1st. The big scheme was that all the four armies should advance on Paris simultaneously.

In the meantime Wellington and Blucher had to wait. Both of them have been blamed for extending their armies too widely, but this is a matter of opinion.

Wellington wanted to cover his lines of communication with his base at Ostend, for he expected that the French would advance in that direction; to the end of his life he maintained that this would have been Napoleon's best move. He therefore spread his forces out very much to the West. His reserve was at Brussels; 1st corps at Braine le Comte; 2nd at Ath, and stretched out as far as Oudenarde. From right to left was forty miles, and from Brussels to the outposts was rather more. The troops were scattered in the villages ("disperse to feed") because he did not want to make the billeting too hard on the inhabitants, who were not well disposed. He trusted he would get information of any movement of the French in time to concentrate and meet it.

For similar reasons the Prussians were strung out from Namur to Liege, sixty miles. The dividing-line between the two armies was the main road from Brussels to Charleroi. The outposts were along the River Sambre and on the frontier farther to the West.

NAPOLEON'S PLAN.—The numbers of the French were increasing daily; if Napoleon had waited in a defensive attitude he would have had over 200,000 by July 1st. But a defensive attitude would have meant abandoning large tracts of France to the invaders, and as his power was not firmly consolidated he could not afford to do this. He therefore decided to advance into Belgium before the Russians and Austrians could make themselves felt; his intention was, as in 1796, to push in between the two armies, hoping to be able to defeat one of them before the other

could come up. By false reports and movements on the frontier he kept the Allies, and especially Wellington, uncertain as to his real direction. Then, on June 14th, he gave orders for crossing the Sambre, and thus opened the memorable campaign which only lasted four days.

JUNE 15th.—The French crossed the Sambre in three columns, as shown on the sketch. That night the head of the left was at Frasnes, the centre two miles short of Fleurus, the right near Chatelet.

Napoleon had intended to reach Quatre Bras and Sombreffe, but did not succeed. Vandamme was late in starting, because the orders were sent by a *single* mounted officer, who was thrown from his horse and broke his leg; he lay for five hours in the dark, and the orders were of course delayed. Note the bad staff work.

In the course of the day Napoleon decided to put the left column (Reille and D'Erlon) under Ney, and the right (Gerard and Vandamme) under Grouchy. Ney had received sudden orders to join the army, and only arrived late on the afternoon of the 15th. He saw Napoleon and received some verbal instructions; it is said he was told to advance as far as Quatre Bras. He galloped on to Frasnes, and found his van-guard skirmishing with some Dutch-Belgians. Thinking that the whole of Wellington's army might be in front of him, he halted the head of his weary column at Frasnes and rode back to Charleroi to report.

Blucher got information of the French advance early in the morning, and ordered his four corps to concentrate at Sombreffe. Ziethen's corps, which supplied the outposts along the Sambre, fell back, fighting steadily. But the bridges over the river were not destroyed. Through an accident Bulow, who was at Liege, got no orders, and consequently made no move until the next day.

Though reports had reached Wellington that the French were active, it was not until the afternoon of the 15th that

he got anything at all definite. At 5 p.m. the first orders were issued. He still clung to the idea that Napoleon would advance by Mons. At 10 p.m. further news was received, and orders were issued for a partial concentration at Nivelles, but the main road to Charleroi was left open, for which he has been blamed. After issuing orders, Wellington asked Baron Muffling, the Prussian liaison officer, to come with him to the Duchess of Richmond's ball.

Thackeray has shown us the booths of Vanity Fair set up in the flower-market of Brussels; the Cathedral towers and quaint old gables; "the Juke himself" riding in the park with Lord Uxbridge; the ball, famous in history, which only broke up when the bugles were sounding the assembly; the dawn faintly streaking the sky as the whole city awoke; colours and bayonets, bagpipes, fifes and drums; the girls they left behind them.

Wellington entered the ballroom towards midnight and stayed till 2 a.m. He called some of the generals together and told them quietly of the orders he had just sent out. He took the Duke of Richmond aside and said, "Napoleon has humbugged me, by God! He has gained twenty-four hours' start." But all the eye-witnesses agree that he was in the best of spirits.

THE CHIEFS.—It is interesting to contrast the doings of the two chiefs on this night.

Wellington, in the absence of reliable information, issued orders which did not fit the situation at all, and then went off to a ball. His subordinates, who were nearer the front, had *good* information, and either heard the guns or had reports of them. Therefore, as might be expected in the Duke's army, instead of obeying the letter of the orders, they used their own judgment—they disobeyed, and did exactly the right thing. That is to say, the Prince of Saxe Weimar, who was at Genappe and was ordered to Nivelles, marched his brigade to Quatre Bras; also the staff officer at Nivelles disobeyed orders and sent another brigade to

Quatre Bras. It is generally thought that these two brigades saved the situation, and the critics consider the Duke very lucky in having such subordinates.

While Wellington was having supper with the Duchess of Richmond, Napoleon was busy. He had seen Ney in the afternoon, but gave him another long interview between 1 and 2 a.m. In case this should not be enough, he followed it up with written orders, beginning at 5 a.m., and there are records of at least five more orders despatched during the day. (Houssaye counts eight.) Ney had more courage than brains, and by the time the last order reached him he was so exasperated and excited that he disobeyed—with fatal results. The critics think this was bad luck on Napoleon.

It is not my intention to draw the moral that the best thing a chief can do is to issue wrong orders and then go off to a ball; but I argue very seriously that subordinates are *what their chiefs make them.* The Duke's men (note there were two of them) were not hustled; they acted as a matter of course—and did right.

All historians agree that Ney was by nature a "thruster," but that he was not his natural self on June 16th. What brought about so curious a change? Perhaps those two lectures from Napoleon had something to do with it? There is no authentic record of what was said. Most soldiers have at some time heard, "Be bold, but for heaven's sake don't risk anything." Was that the text of Napoleon's sermon? He knew that Ney was a thruster, so, if he wanted him to thrust, why not let him alone? It seems very probable that he said something which cramped Ney's style.

JUNE 16th.—By marching his troops from eighteen to twenty-five miles, Napoleon had surprised the Allies to some extent, but from the tone of his letters on the morning of the 16th it appears that they also had surprises in store for him. He thought he would only have one Prussian

Corps to deal with ; he ordered Ney to advance, as if there were nothing in front of him ; and he contemplated marching to Brussels that night.

QUATRE BRAS.—The first allied troops to reach Quatre Bras were the two brigades of Dutch-Belgians who went there contrary to orders. The Prince of Orange put them all in the front line to make a show of strength, and very successfully imposed on the French. The result was that while Napoleon was writing as if there was nobody there, Ney saw with his own eyes some 4,000 of the enemy, and a wood behind them which might hold any number more. He did not thrust. It is to be noted that Ney had encountered the Iron Duke in Spain, and knew that it was his custom to conceal his main body. The whole morning was spent in getting Reille's corps closed up, and no attack was made until 2 p.m.

The Duke himself arrived at Quatre Bras about 10 a.m. He then rode over to see Blucher at Brye, returning to Quatre Bras soon after the French attack was launched.

By that time the Prince of Orange had collected 7,000 of his Dutch-Belgians, and they held out against 18,000 French until Picton's British division arrived at 3 p.m.

Ney, having once started, kept up continuous assaults for five hours, and led some of the charges himself ; he had two horses killed under him. There were moments when the defenders were very hard pressed. The Duke of Brunswick was killed while trying to rally his troops. But reinforcements came up successively, till by 7 p.m. Wellington had 30,000 against 20,000. Ney had ordered D'Erlon to reinforce Reille, but found that the former had been diverted to Ligny. He finally withdrew to Frasnes about 7 p.m., leaving Wellington in possession of the field.

The Allies had 4,600 casualties ; the French not quite so many.

LIGNY.—Meanwhile to the South-east the battle had been raging at Ligny. In the morning Blucher had made

up his mind to fight; he had three corps, amounting to nearly 90,000. At 11 a.m. the Duke came to see him, and suggested that the Prussians were too much exposed to view; Gneisenau retorted sharply to the effect that "the Prussians liked to see their enemy." The Duke, of course, could not insist. He went back to Quatre Bras, after promising to help, "provided he were not attacked himself." This promise, and especially the last words, must be noted. Attempts have been made by Prussian authors to suggest that Wellington deliberately held out false hopes in order to get Blucher to stand fast, thereby gaining time for himself to complete his tardy concentration. The Duke's character is of course sufficient answer to this.

There is plenty of evidence, besides the character of "Marshal Vorwarts," that Blucher intended to fight in any case. The Duke was attacked, and could not spare a man to march to Ligny; but his action at Quatre Bras kept 40,000 Frenchmen from marching there, and helped Blucher very much indeed.

The Prussians took up a position behind the Ligny brook, with their right flank thrown rather forward. As they were on the slopes on the North bank of the brook they were to some extent exposed to view and to artillery fire. From a mill near Fleurus Napoleon examined the position, and began to realise that he had more than one corps in front of him. He decided to make his big effort against the centre at Ligny village, hoping that Ney would come round and envelope the Prussian right, thereby making the victory decisive. All day long he was expecting Ney to finish off the British and come to his assistance; but he was kept badly informed about the situation at Quatre Bras, and his orders to Ney were based on ignorance. The result was that Ney, who knew the situation, was maddened by getting orders which were obvious misfits.

At 2 p.m. the corps of Vandamme and Gerard attacked furiously, but could not pierce the defence. Blucher,

however, was forced to use up his reserves. At 3.15 p.m. Napoleon sent off a definite order to Ney to direct D'Erlon's Corps on Brye. He then decided to throw his Guards against Ligny. Just as they were moving to the assault a false alarm was received from Vandamme that a body of the enemy was approaching from the left rear. This was really D'Erlon's corps, but it took no less than an hour and a half to correct the mistake, and meanwhile the Guards were halted. When they finally advanced they were irresistible; crossing the stream at Ligny, they broke the Prussian centre and won the day.

The gallant Blucher led a final charge of his cavalry; his horse was killed, and he lay under it while the French cuirassiers swept over him. Fortunately he was not recognised, and one of his staff succeeded in getting him away, half stunned.

By 9.30 p.m. the French had won the victory, but it was not decisive. There was no pursuit. The Prussians held Brye and Sombreffe till past midnight, and then drew off undisturbed. They had lost 12,000 men and some 30 guns, but no unwounded prisoners. They assembled next evening at Wavre, sixteen miles away, in good order. This fact speaks for itself.

The French lost 11,000, and could not afford them so well as the Allies. It was a famous victory, but not a great material gain.

About 7 p.m. a heavy thunderstorm had broken over the field; it is curious that neither Ropes, Thiers, nor Von Wartenburg mention this, for it must have been important in many ways. No doubt it had something to do with the failure of the French to pursue. It also laid the dust, which otherwise would have betrayed the march of the Prussians next morning. It must have delayed the French ambulances and ammunition carts, which had to be brought up during the night.

Some authors say that but for accidents at the start

Napoleon would have won another Jena and Auerstadt. True ; but it may be added that only an accident prevented Bulow's corps (30,000) from being at Ligny, and he might have made Jena and Auerstadt go the other way. If Ney had always done the right thing the French would have won. True again ; but if the Duke had always had good information he would also have done the right thing, and would have had 70,000 at Quatre Bras instead of 7,000. If one side does everything right and the other everything wrong it is not hard to guess the winner.

D'ERLON.—The extraordinary movements of D'Erlon's corps must be noted, though it took no part in the battle.

He was under Ney's command, and at first was ordered to reinforce Reille at Quatre Bras ; he was about four miles from the battle-field at four o'clock. At 3.15 p.m. Napoleon wrote an order *for Ney* that D'Erlon should march on Brye. The officer who carried this order met D'Erlon near Frasnes, and gave the order to him, *and did not go on to inform Ney.* D'Erlon sent his own chief staff officer to tell Ney what had happened, and then turned off and marched four miles to the right in the direction of Brye ; there he came within sight of Vandamme's troops, who mistook him for the enemy and raised a false alarm.

All day long Ney had been bombarded with orders to finish off the British, and he was anxiously waiting for D'Erlon to come up. To him at 6 p.m. enters a staff officer with the news that D'Erlon had gone off elsewhere. Ney was furious, and sent the staff officer with imperative orders to bring D'Erlon back to Quatre Bras at once. D'Erlon, in a dilemma, now obeyed this last order, and arrived back at Frasnes when the battle was over. His total efforts amounted to marching his corps eight miles for nothing, and creating a false alarm which cost Napoleon a couple of hours of valuable daylight.

This was a case of " Order, Counter-order, Disorder," for which several people must share the blame. Napoleon

himself started the counter-order; he had definitely put D'Erlon under Ney, and then took him away again. It would, of course, be absurd to say that a chief must never change his orders during a battle; but it ought to be done with the greatest care, to inform all concerned in the most unmistakable way. This was not done.

The staff officer who took the order from Napoleon was right in giving it to D'Erlon, so as to save time; but he certainly ought to have galloped on at once to Ney to explain. This was not done.

Ney ought to have let D'Erlon proceed to Brye, first because it was an order, and second, because it was too late to get him back in time to be of use. But he had also been ordered to crush the British at once, and he knew that Napoleon did not grasp the situation; he therefore disobeyed.

"Order, Counter-order, Disorder." It may have cost Napoleon a big victory.

JUNE 17th.—When Blucher was knocked over and disappeared Gneisenau took up the command, and issued instructions for all the Prussians to retire to Wavre.

This was the all-important order which gave victory to the Allies, because it enabled them to join hands at Waterloo.

It has been said that Gneisenau deserves no credit, because he did not give the order with a view to co-operation, but simply because Wavre was the easiest point at which the Prussians could assemble. But unless he had some idea of co-operation in his mind he would probably have ordered a movement toward Liege. By going to Wavre he did not altogether abandon his lines of communication, but he went near doing so.

Wellington, who fully acknowledged the help he got from the Prussians throughout the campaign, afterwards wrote that Gneisenau's move was "the decisive moment of the century."

Napoleon rose at 8 a.m., but his army made no move before noon. He spent the morning in riding over the battlefield of Ligny and chatting with his officers. Much

surprise has been expressed at the waste of time, and some authors think that such lassitude points to the malady. The troops may have felt some lassitude, too. They had fought a pitched battle up till nearly 10 p.m., they had got drenched by a thunderstorm, and had expended all their ammunition. But the two corps of Lobau and D'Erlon had not been in action, and they certainly might have been set in motion early in the morning. There are, however, two possible reasons (besides the malady) for the delay. First, Napoleon was waiting for information; he had not heard what was happening at Quatre Bras; he did not know where the Prussians had gone. Second, he wanted to give the Imperial Guard time to fill up with ammunition and get a meal; his intention now was to join Ney and march to Brussels, but Napoleon without his Guard would have been like Jupiter without his thunder.

At noon he ordered Grouchy, with 33,000 men, to follow up the Prussians and complete their defeat. From this moment Grouchy takes up the role of chief scapegoat—*vice* Ney, relieved. He certainly did everything wrong, and was of no further use to Napoleon. But his task was not an easy one, and much more difficult than Napoleon thought. It will be discussed later on.

The British had bivouacked on the field of Quatre Bras on the night of the 16th. It was not until 8 a.m. on the 17th that the Duke got news through a cavalry patrol of the result of Ligny. "Old Blucher," he said, "has had a damned good licking and gone back to Wavre. We must follow his example. I suppose they will say in England that we have been thrashed, too! I cannot help it."

He decided to retire to Waterloo, but he let the troops breakfast before moving.

At 10 a.m. an officer arrived from Gneisenau to ask for news. The Duke said, "I am going to take up my position at Mt. St. Jean. There I will wait for Napoleon and give him battle, if I may hope to be supported by a single

Prussian corps. But if this support is denied me I will be compelled to sacrifice Brussels."

At about that hour the troops began to move off along the main road, covered by a cavalry rear-guard.

Napoleon arrived at Quatre Bras with the Guard and Lobau about 2 p.m. Rain began to come down in torrents. All afternoon Napoleon led his van-guard, and arrived at La Belle Alliance at half-past six. His troops straggled up through the mud and lay down for the night in wet fields.

At dusk a few cannon shots were exchanged, and Napoleon satisfied himself that Wellington would stand to fight.

He might have drawn the inference that the Duke would not have accepted battle unless he was sure of support from the Prussians. But this was opposed to the convictions the Emperor had formed. A report was brought to him that a waiter in a tavern at Genappe, where the Duke had breakfasted, heard a British staff officer say that the Prussians were at Wavre and would join the British. Napoleon treated this as nonsense. "After such a battle as Ligny the junction between the English and Prussians is impossible for at least two days; besides, the Prussians have Grouchy on their heels."

Napoleon started at 1 a.m. to walk round the outposts, and then came back to breakfast. Soult, who had had experience of the Iron Duke in Spain, ventured to murmur a warning, and suggested that Grouchy should be recalled. But the Emperor replied brutally, "Because you have been beaten by Wellington you consider him a good general; but I tell you that Wellington is a bad general, and that the English are bad troops, and that it will be all over before dinner."

All this shows that Napoleon was floundering in the mud in more than one sense. His ignorance was complete, and was due to himself.

JUNE 18th.—It was not until 2 a.m. on the 18th that Wellington finally decided to accept battle; he had been

waiting to hear from Blucher. Marshal Vorwarts was eager to assist; Gneisenau hesitated at first, but when the Prussian Ammunition Column turned up at Wavre, and all the corps were reported present, he gave way. Blucher, in much delight, wrote to the Duke that Bulow would march at daylight to Mt. St. Jean and other corps would follow. The gallant old man was not defeated at Ligny, in spite of his fall from his horse, and he pledged himself. The Iron Duke believed in his word.

The British line was along a low ridge; guns on the crest; infantry behind them on the reverse slope, out of sight of the enemy; cavalry at first in second line; the Duke did not keep all his British troops together, but distributed them along the line to stiffen the rest. A sunken road just behind the crest formed a sort of natural trench for some way. Two farms in front of the ridge were prepared for defence, and garrisoned, Hougoumont by the British Guards, and La Haye Sainte by the King's German Legion. In length the main position measured about 3,500 yards, and was occupied by 70,000 men; thus the thin red line of legend would have been twenty men deep if they had all formed up shoulder to shoulder. The guns work out at one for twenty yards, but less than half of them were in the front line to start with. Seventeen thousand men were left near Hal, seven miles to the West; for this Wellington has been criticised.

An interesting point is that no entrenchments or obstacles were made. Why? It was not because they were forgotten, for the Duke was not the man to forget such things; It was not because he did not know their value in defence; he had designed the lines of Torres Vedras. It was not for lack of time; he had selected the position weeks before. The answer seems to be that he wanted to be free to assume the offensive as soon as the Prussians should come up; he was forced to a defensive attitude at first, as it would have been folly to attack with only half the Allied forces;

but he was looking forward to the great moment, and did not want his men tied up in redoubts and obstacles.

Note the contrast between Ligny, where the Prussians were posted on a forward slope, and Waterloo, where the main line was in rear of the crest; only skirmishers were out in front between the advanced posts.

The Duke's tactics were very fine. The infantry was deployed into line to meet infantry attacks by heavy fire, but formed squares to meet cavalry charges; the gunners on the crest fired until the enemy was on them, and then left their guns and ran into the squares. The only chance the French had was to make combined attacks with infantry and cavalry. This they failed to do, and the result was they were beaten in tactics.

Napoleon had a slight superiority in men, cavalry, and still more in guns; on the whole they were better troops. This was balanced by the advantage which the position gave the defence, and the obstacle which the mud presented to the attack.

D'Erlon's corps was formed up on the East of the main road, Reille's on the West. Cavalry masses formed the second line. The Guard and Lobau's corps were in reserve.

THE BATTLE.—Sunday morning, June 18th, was wet and cheerless. The rain stopped at eight o'clock, except for showers.

Napoleon originally meant to launch his attack at nine o'clock, but was persuaded to postpone it by his gunners, who wanted to let the ground dry a little before they tried to get their guns into position. It is generally held that the delay was much to the advantage of Wellington. But, as Clausewitz says, if Napoleon had attacked earlier no doubt Blucher would have done so too.

His plan was to break the British left centre, so as to drive them off the Brussels road; but in order to distract attention he began with an attack on Hougoumont at 11.30. It

was intended that this should be carried out by one division only out of the four divisions in Reille's corps. But it turned out very badly; the first division got into the wood, but failed to get over the wall of the garden or into the buildings. Other troops were sent to reinforce, and the greater part of Reille's corps was occupied all day in this fruitless attack.

General Shaw Kennedy, who was present, says, "The battle was a great drama in five acts, with distinct and well-defined intervals."

First Phase.—The preliminary attack on Hougoumont. As above stated, it went on all day.

About one o'clock Napoleon noticed something like a dark cloud issuing from a wood five miles to the North-east. He pointed it out to the officers around him, and all glasses were turned on it. Some contended that there were no troops there, but only a clump of trees (Birnam Wood!) or the shadow of a cloud; others saw a marching column, and even discerned French uniforms, or Prussian uniforms.

The question was soon settled. Marbot's cavalry captured a Prussian subaltern of hussars, who was brought to the Emperor; he was the bearer of a note from Blucher to Muffling, announcing the arrival of Bulow at St. Lambert.

Even now Napoleon felt no alarm. He sent two cavalry divisions in that direction, and Lobau's corps to take up a position in rear of them. He said to Soult, "This morning we had odds of ninety to ten in our favour; we have still sixty to forty." He then turned to the main attack.

Second Phase.—1.30 to 3 p.m. The main infantry attack by D'Erlon, to the East of the road. A battery of 80 guns had been pushed forward to within 600 yards of the position to prepare this attack, which was intended to be the decisive one. The French got up to the crest, and in some places as far as the sunken road, but were met by a counter-attack of Picton's Division. Picton himself was killed.

Then Ponsonby's Union Brigade—the Royals, Greys, and

Inniskillings—Rose, Thistle, and Shamrock—made the famous cavalry charge which threw the French back into the valley. But the valour of the Union Brigade carried it too far, and when its horses were spent, a charge of French cavalry forced it back. Ponsonby and two colonels were killed, and out of 1,200 men only one-third re-formed after their achievement.

Third Phase.—4 to 6 p.m. About 5,000 French cavalry attacked in heavy masses between Hougoumont and the road. The British gunners kept up their fire to the last moment and then ran inside their infantry squares. The French neither spiked the guns nor took them away. They surged all round the squares, which, placed chequerwise, brought a devastating fire on them and drove them back. They were pursued by allied cavalry. The attacks were repeated many times without success.

Ney realised that cavalry alone could not pierce those stubborn squares, and sent an urgent request for more infantry. Napoleon's reply was, "De l'infanterie? Où voulez vous que j'en prenne? Voulez vous que je les fasse?" But he still had his Guard in hand, and it is thought that if he had used it at once he would have been wiser.

About 4.30 Bulow began to press the French right, and drove them back to Planchenoit. Napoleon was forced to send half the Guard to support Lobau.

The Prussian advance had been very slow. From Wavre to Planchenoit is only ten miles; accidents had delayed the start, but by noon Bulow's corps was at St. Lambert. From there to Planchenoit is only five miles, yet no serious pressure was made until 4.30. The roads were certainly bad, but there is another reason for the delay. Gneisenau wanted to see Wellington fully committed to the battle before the Prussians were thrown in; he was afraid that Napoleon might turn his whole strength against the Prussians.

Fourth Phase.—6 to 7.30 p.m. D'Erlon's infantry, after

reforming, renewed their assaults, especially on La Haye Sainte; they took this farm about 6 p.m. Their attacks, which were sometimes supported by cavalry, pressed the defence very hard, and came nearer success than the former ones.

The Duke said afterwards, "Never did I see such a pounding match; both sides were what the boxers call gluttons."

Ammunition was running out. The Household Cavalry Brigade made charge after charge to relieve the infantry, but lost so many men and horses that there was little of it left; it was joined up with the Union Brigade, and the two of them together could scarcely muster a couple of squadrons.

But Ziethen's corps was at last beginning to appear at Papelotte. This made the British left secure, and allowed the cavalry brigades of Vivian and Vandeleur to be moved to the support of the hard-pressed centre. Wellington managed to bring up other reserves, and though Ney led many gallant assaults the French were worn down; by seven o'clock their pressure slackened.

Planchenoit was taken and retaken more than once, but at 7.30 was in the hands of the French. Napoleon therefore decided to make his final effort.

Fifth Phase.—At 7.30 ten battalions of the Imperial Guard advanced between Hougoumont and the road. They moved in two columns. The British Guards waited, lying down, till the French were within fifty yards of them. Then the red line sprang up, fired one volley, and charged. Napoleon's old heroes were staggered and gave way.

The second column, which was moving on the left rear of the first, was checked by Adam's Brigade. Colonel Colborne, of the 52nd Foot, brought his regiment against the flank of this column and poured in volleys which broke it entirely, then followed with a bayonet charge.

Napoleon's final effort had failed, and the Duke ordered his whole line to advance to the great counter-attack.

At the same time Bulow had taken Planchenoit once more, and Ziethen was in Papelotte. The French were thus taken both in front and flank and their retreat became a complete rout.

The French lost 30,000 men and all their guns. The 40,000 who succeeded in getting back across the Sambre were no longer an army.

The Duke's army had 15,000 casualties and the Prussians 7,000.

LA BELLE ALLIANCE.—Legend has pictured the meeting (which has also been put on canvas) between the Iron Duke and Marshal Vorwarts at La Belle Alliance. A British band played "God save the King," while wounded Prussians sang Luther's hymn. Blucher suggested that the battle should take its name from the happy meeting-place.

Further legend says that the owner of La Belle Alliance, a rich but ugly old man, had married a young and beautiful peasant girl; kindly neighbours had named the farm.

It has, however, been proved that the historic meeting took place four miles farther on towards Genappe, and neither band nor wounded soldiers had arrived to supply music. But an important agreement was reached—that the Prussians should continue the pursuit. It went on all night, right up to the river Sambre.

GROUCHY.—To finish the story of Grouchy. It will be remembered that he got his orders about noon on the 17th. Napoleon first gave him verbal instructions, and then followed them up with what is known as the "Bertrand Order," because it was written by General Bertrand at the Emperor's dictation.

"Proceed to Gembloux. . . . You will send out scouts in the direction of Namur and Maestricht (the Liege road) and you will pursue the enemy. . . . It is important to discover what Wellington and Blucher mean to do, and

whether they meditate uniting their armies to cover Brussels and Liege by risking the fate of a battle. At all events keep your infantry within the limits of a league (2½ miles), reserving several outlets for retreat."

This shows that Napoleon believed the Prussians had gone eastwards; there is no mention of Wavre. Grouchy was to pursue the enemy. But where were they?

Some accounts leave the impression that they had vanished off the face of Belgium, but the reality was far worse—the Prussians were everywhere. Stragglers on the road to Namur, eight guns, and several wagons caught by French cavalry; others on the road to Liege; tracks on all the roads and fields; every peasant had seen millions of Prussians. In fact, if Blucher had left a good cavalry screen to cover his movement it could not have served him better than did these stragglers.

Grouchy, in doubt, stuck to the letter of his orders—marched his infantry to Gembloux and halted there; they had only gone some eight miles, but rain had been falling in torrents all afternoon. He might have pushed on farther, but did not want to risk going in a wrong direction.

By 3 a.m. on the 18th he knew that the Prussians had gone to Wavre, and at 7 a.m. he left Gembloux to follow them. At 11.30 he was at Walhain, and there he heard the sound of the first guns at Waterloo.

Gerard tried to persuade him to march by the bridges at Mousty so as to cut in between Wavre and the battle; but again he stuck to his orders and pursued the Prussians instead of trying to cut them off.

From what we now know it is clear that his only chance was to follow Gerard's advice. But it is a matter for conjecture whether he would have been quick enough or strong enough to stop the indomitable Blucher from carrying out his promise to Wellington. Bulow's corps was at St. Lambert by noon, five miles from Planchenoit, while Grouchy was at Walhain, twelve miles away. Grouchy had 33,000

men who had all fought at Ligny ; the Prussians had 90,000 of whom 30,000 (Bulow's corps) were fresh troops.

He came upon the Prussian rear-guard four miles South of Wavre at about 4 p.m., and pressed it back into the town itself ; there he fought till 11 p.m. But only one corps of Prussians was against him—the other three were fighting at Waterloo.

It was not till next morning that he got news of Napoleon's defeat. He made a very skilful movement back to France through Namur.

NAPOLEON.—The Emperor himself retired in one of the squares of the Old Guard. He was held up for some time by the crush of fugitives in the narrow street of Genappe. After this he rode on with Soult, a few other officers, and a dozen lancers. He reached Charleroi, twenty miles from the battle-field, at 5 a.m., and Philippeville at 9 a.m. There he wrote letters, and issued some orders which were never carried out.

About 11 a.m. he got into a carriage and fell asleep. He had been thirty-four hours continuously on foot and horseback.

He reached Paris at 5 a.m. on June 21st.

As regards Napoleon's health, evidence has been collected which shows that he was suffering from three distinct maladies. There is also reliable evidence that his diary might run as follows :

June 15th.—Eighteen hours on foot and horseback. Two interviews with Ney. Wrote several letters and issued orders.

June 16th.—Eighteen hours on foot and horseback. Controlled the battle of Ligny and led the attack of the Guard in person.

June 17th.—Sixteen hours on foot and horseback. Led the van-guard in pouring rain. Reconnoitred in the mud. Wrote letters.

June 18th.—Rose at 1 a.m. and visited all the outposts on foot. Issued orders and controlled the battle till 9 p.m. Rode in retreat till 9 a.m. next morning.

The supporters of the theory of "impaired physical powers" have not said how much more should be expected from a man of forty-five who has grown very fat.

It may be suggested that if, in an army of experienced soldiers, there is no one who can be trusted to lead a vanguard or visit outposts, the Commander-in-Chief is likely to be overworked, whether he has three maladies or none. His effort was a prolonged and gallant one, but not wise.

Wellington, who was the same age, left his outposts and rear-guard to subordinates. He was "lucky."

THE CRITICS.—The campaign of Waterloo takes up more pages than any other four days in history, but the battle is not yet over between rival authors; praise and censure, excuses and explanations, are exchanged in volleys. In the early days of last century there was some war between British and Prussian authors regarding the share of their respective armies in the victory, but this died down, and the field was practically left to the French. They are honest men and good patriots, all deploring the tragedy, but quite unable to agree about the cause of it.

To Thiers the infallibility of his general is a dogma. Napoleon ought to have been victorious according to the rules of the game. He was beaten, not by his very inferior opponents, but by the incompetence of Ney, the wickedness of Grouchy, and minor accidents of staff work and weather. In fact, everybody gets bad marks except Napoleon and his rank and file. The plan of campaign was the most brilliant of all the master's conceptions. The two allied generals ought to have fallen apart in terror when so invincible an enemy sprang his surprise between them. Black marks for Wellington and Blucher. After Ligny Napoleon was justified in thinking that the Prussians

were *hors de combat*; at Waterloo he was justified in thinking he would only have Wellington to deal with. If these reasonable assumptions had been correct he would have won a great victory.

In 1858 Colonel Charras published a volume from the other point of view. The French army deserved a better commander. Napoleon's plan was fatal because he underestimated his opponents. Grouchy was not blameless, but he had been given a ridiculous task, and nothing that he could have done would have altered the result. "Avec plus de prévoyance et moins d'obstination chez Napoléon" the French Army would have been victorious.

These two are examples of the extremists; there are many others.

Near the end of last century Henri Houssaye published his famous work; it was hailed by the French Press as a masterpiece—"le dernier mot." Literally it was not the last word, but it will outlive many of its successors.

Houssaye is calmer in his judgment than Thiers, with his emphatic assertions, or Charras, "avec sa haine farouche." He thinks Napoleon's original plan was good, but the execution was very bad. He blames Ney and Grouchy, but gives a share of it to Napoleon himself. "Grouchy acted blindly, but Napoleon did nothing to enlighten him." "In 1815 Napoleon was in sufficiently good health to bear the great fatigues of war, and his brain had lost none of its power. But with him, his moral power no longer upheld his genius." "The Emperor had lost faith in his star, and this state of mind accounted for his irresolution, his confused estimate of events, and the respite often given to the enemy."

His book gives quite enough detail, but nothing irrelevant or tedious, and will be found very useful to those who wish to pursue the subject. It has been translated into English.

One remark I will make with all immodesty from the point of view of an Englishman. Houssaye does not

appreciate the Iron Duke; he gives the impression that subordinates saved their chief, and therefore ought to get the whole of the credit. Wellington himself said, "When I made mistakes my men pulled me through." Certainly the Duke owed them much, but first of all he made them. Take such men as Hill, Uxbridge, Picton; they were by nature good soldiers, but their crowning virtue was confidence; it was not the cocksure satisfaction of ignorance, nor was it the careless confidence of men who have an easy-going commander. The Iron Duke was a martinet, sparing of praise, sharp in his rebukes. But he was just, and perhaps this was what bred that mutual sympathy between him and his men. Uxbridge has put it on record that during the whole course of the battle he never received an order from Wellington; he chose the opportunities for cavalry charges himself, and did not wait for orders or expect them. This shows mutual confidence.

The text-books and regulations have plenty to say on the subject of confidence and responsibility. But such things are not learnt from books or sermons; it is the commander who sets the form of an army in these matters, and shows his subordinates whether they are the slaves of orders or are free to use initiative. Wellington seems to have hit the happy mean—at all events the result was good.

Such men as Hill and Uxbridge will pull their chief through, but would they have been so good under Napoleon? The Emperor had such sublime belief in himself that he despised other people. His orders, his words, his whole attitude, showed his subordinates that he distrusted them—so much so that in the end they distrusted themselves. Ney, Vandamme, Grouchy, had quite as much experience as the British generals, and were "gluttons" if ever men were, and yet they failed.

Napoleon's plan of campaign was bold and brilliant; he rushed in between two armies, each of which was scarcely

inferior to his own in numbers; and yet we must admit that he was within measurable distance of victory. But when his first moves did not work out according to his intentions he gradually lost touch of the situation, and in the end was quite at sea. Wellington waited to get facts to work on. Granted that he waited too long and that he failed to grasp the opening moves of the enemy. But once he arrived at Quatre Bras he got a grip of the situation—and never let go.[1]

MARCHES.—One more remark from the point of view of an infantry soldier. Some of the critics seem very light-hearted in the way they suggest the correct movements for human legs. The French soldier carried a pack weighing sixty pounds. June 15th was a terribly hot day; some of Ney's infantry marched twenty-five miles; a certain critic suggests that they might have gone five miles farther and then fought a battle.

On the 17th and 18th there was about sixteen hours of heavy and continuous rain. Thousands of British soldiers who have first-hand knowledge of Belgian mud can picture the state of the unpaved country roads. A critic suggests that Grouchy, with about 30,000 infantry and 90 guns, could very well have marched sixteen miles, on a single road, in seven hours; again there was a pitched battle to be fought at the end of it.

[1] There are two points about the campaign which are difficult to explain: first, Wellington's conviction that Napoleon would advance by Mons towards Ghent; second, Wellington's silence on this subject. It may be argued that Wellington's silence was characteristic of the man, who never excused himself, but his neglect to guard the Charleroi road was very unlike him. A possible solution is that Fouché gave him information that Napoleon would move on Ghent. It has been proved that Fouché, who was once more Minister of Police, was playing the traitor and keeping in touch with the Bourbons, Metternich, and Wellington. He may have sent a definite report that Napoleon would move by Mons. Wellington would not care to admit that he had been duped by such a man as Fouché, and, after Waterloo, Fouché himself would not publish the fact that he had been furnishing false information. It must, however, be admitted that no positive evidence can be produced.

Measured on the map, such marches have been done in history, but mileage gives only a very rough idea of a march; the big factors are the state of the road and the weather, the length of the column, the condition of the men; what they did the day before, and what they may be required to do the day after. It is only the officer on the spot who has full information on these points, and he is the best judge of what can be done and what cannot.

Thiers discusses the slow start of Wellington's army, and says, "As he commanded men who would more willingly forgive him for risking their lives than causing them unnecessary fatigue he had refrained from issuing orders." Yes. The Duke was an infantry man.

CHAPTER XXIV

ST. HELENA

THE ABDICATION.—Napoleon soon recovered from the stunning effect of Waterloo, and refused to accept it as a final defeat. The very next day he wrote to Lucien that he would raise another army to defend France: "But the people must help me and not bewilder me. . . . Write to me what effect this horrible piece of bad luck has had on the Chamber. I believe that the Deputies will feel convinced that their duty in this crowning moment is to rally round me and save France."

The Deputies, however, thought otherwise; on June 22nd they gave him one hour in which to abdicate, and would have deposed him had he refused. He signed an abdication in favour of his son, Napoleon II. Next day a Council of Regency was elected, with Fouché as President. But this only lasted till Louis XVIII returned to Paris on July 8th.

Napoleon retired to Malmaison, where he made plans to go to America. He also offered to serve in the French army as General Bonaparte. Fouché exclaimed in anger, "Is he laughing at us? We know how he would keep his promise. . . . He must leave at once for Rochefort." When the Prussian guns were heard Napoleon left, and arrived at Rochefort on July 2nd. Here he spent a fortnight, sometimes making more plans for escape, sometimes apathetic. British ships were blockading the coast. On the 14th two of his staff went on board H.M.S. *Bellerophon* and made arrangements with Captain Maitland for Napoleon to be received next morning.

At daybreak on the 15th Napoleon went on board and said, "I have come to throw myself on the protection of your Prince and your laws."

On July 24th the ship anchored in Torbay, where it was surrounded by hundreds of boats with sightseers, to whom Napoleon showed himself quite willingly.

On the 31st he was told of the decision of the British Government that he was to be sent to St. Helena. He complained bitterly at first, but his moods were very variable.

He was transferred to H.M.S. *Northumberland*, which took him to St. Helena. He landed on Oct. 17th, just four months after Waterloo.

THE EXILE.—To avoid being shot by the Prussians or falling into the hands of the Bourbons (who shot Ney) Napoleon had proposed to become the "guest of the British nation." He would buy a little estate, "about thirty miles from London," and settle down as a country gentleman, under the name of Colonel Muiron.

But the Ministers of His Britannic Majesty held themselves responsible to the nation and their Allies for the safe custody of their uninvited guest. He had cost us many thousands of lives, and £600,000,000 in cash; he had always expressed his hatred and contempt for our country until he had reason to think it might be a safer refuge than other places. Once before he had broken loose. So the Ministers took stern precautions.

When he found he could not become an English gentleman Napoleon decided to be the next best thing—a martyr. In this decision the Ministers met him more than half-way—such at least was the opinion of the Whigs, who made some very moving speeches on the subject.

The executioner was Sir Hudson Lowe, who was appointed Governor of St. Helena.

The charges against Sir Hudson are that he was tyrannical, suspicious of even absurd trifles, tactless, and bad-mannered. The defence is that he was made personally responsible for

the custody of Napoleon ; that there were incidents to excite suspicion, such as plots by American adventurers ; that in refusing to address Napoleon as Emperor he was obeying the orders of his Government ; finally, that Napoleon took a malicious pleasure in playing the martyr.

The actual grounds of complaint have been considered by Lord Rosebery in " The Last Phase " ; they come under the headings of title, finance, and custody.

The British Government decided that the prisoner was to be called General Bonaparte, and gave all the officials strict orders to that effect. Lord Rosebery thinks this was unchivalrous and undignified. Sir Walter Scott says, " There could be no reason why Britain, in compassionate courtesy, should give to her prisoner a title which she had refused him *de jure*, even while he wielded the Empire of France *de facto* " . . . " Once acknowledged an Emperor it followed, of course, that he was to be treated as such in every particular, and thus it would have been impossible to enforce such regulations as were absolutely demanded for his safe custody " . . . " If he was acknowledged Emperor of France, of what country was Louis XVIII, King ? "

From the fact that the prisoner himself proposed to be known first as Colonel Muiron and then as the Emperor Napoleon, it is to be feared that he was not in a mood to be content with anything. He wanted a martyr's crown, but if the Governor had sent him one he would have complained that it did not fit.

As Napoleon insisted on a title which Sir Hudson was forbidden to give, all intercourse was eventually cut off ; there were only six interviews, in the first three months. Lord Rosebery says, " Lowe was antipathetic to him as a man and as his gaoler. Consequently Napoleon lost his temper outrageously when they met." It may be assumed that the prisoner who " lost his temper outrageously " was antipathetic to Lowe. For the last five years they never met.

The Government issued an order that the expenses of General Bonaparte's household were not to exceed £8,000 a year; at Sir Hudson's own request this was raised to £12,000. Napoleon, who had ample funds in Paris and even in St. Helena, amused himself by ordering that his silver was to be broken up and sold, to provide something for his servants to eat. The sale would of course be known in the town, and in spite of all censorship the news would be given to the world. A good advertisement for the martyr to British parsimony. But the little comedy was dropped when his dinner was served on a common plate. Silver was brought back.

At night the cordon of sentries was drawn close in round the house, and this caused much annoyance. But there is a point in regard to this which is generally overlooked; the Governor was responsible that Napoleon should not get out, and that other people should not get in. An assassin had followed the Emperor to Elba. Wherever he had been Napoleon had always taken precautions against assassins, very properly; he had a strong guard about his person whether in the field or in the palace, and the faithful Mameluke, Roustan, always slept at his door. Colonel Muiron would have required a good deal of protection in England. In St. Helena Napoleon was no doubt much safer and Sir Hudson's precautions may have been exaggerated. But suppose the sentries had all been taken away—Napoleon would have been clever enough to jump at another injustice —he was left unprotected.

The officer on the spot had information which may have been wrong, and his sentries may have been nearer than was necessary. But he chose to act as if the information were right; he did not want Napoleon to escape or to be assassinated; incidentally he did not want to be tried by Court Martial for disobedience of orders or neglect of duty.

Lord Holland, who had no responsibility, recorded his protest against the mean and unchivalrous treatment.

But Lord Holland happened to be leader of the Whigs, and the unchivalrous Government happened to be Tories. Napoleon lived in hopes that the Tories would be overthrown and Lord Holland would become Prime Minister; he counted on being released when this happy event occurred, and one of the reasons for his loud complaints was the hope that they might be echoed in Westminster.

It would be interesting to know what the Whigs would have done with him if the change of Government had taken place. Would Lord Holland have set him at liberty? Would he have given him the title of Emperor and introduced a vote to double his allowance? What would our Allies and the British Public have said about it? Perhaps Napoleon would have found further reason to call us perfidious.

It is pleasant to feel chivalrous towards the lonely and romantic figure who died in captivity a century ago. But let us get closer by imagining another case—the Hohenzollern Emperor breaks out, raises another army and plunges Europe into a fresh war; after being defeated he invites himself to become the honoured guest of Britain. What ought the British Government to do? The answer of a good Briton is obvious—if the Government in power is the one to which he is opposed, whatever it does will be wrong.

The whole story of St. Helena is tainted by these quarrels and complaints; given on the one side a custodian who is conscientious, stiff, and perhaps a little stupid, on the other side a prisoner who loves a fight—the result is not surprising. On Sir Hudson's part it was serious, on Napoleon's it was probably half comedy with little fits of bad temper.

LONGWOOD.—Apart from his duel with Sir Hudson, Napoleon bore his exile with a courage that was worthy of him.

His companions were by no means so resigned. The most important of them were four French officers, of whom Holland

Rose says, "The impressionable young Gourgaud, the thought-wrinkled Las Cases, the bright pleasure-loving Montholons, the gloomy Grand Marshal, Bertrand—these were not fashioned for a life of adversity."

It certainly was adversity. A house called Longwood was allotted as a residence; it was built of wood and was neither spacious nor comfortable; it stood on a high table-land which was often wreathed in damp mists. Plans were made for building something better, but Napoleon himself was the obstacle, as he refused to give approval to any proposals.

The officers found time very heavy on their hands. They were expected to observe all the etiquette of a Court, and had to stand long hours in the Presence. In his bursts of energy Napoleon paraded everybody for fatigue work in the garden. In the evenings he would read aloud—and did not like to see people yawning. The most interesting hours were those devoted to dictation, but it was no light labour; when Napoleon's thoughts ran away with him the unfortunate scribe was left some way in the rear.

In addition to all this they were bitterly jealous of each other, and often quarrelled openly. It was Napoleon who soothed their irritation with his own serenity and sometimes with mild chaff.

Las Cases was deported by the British for attempting to smuggle letters. Gourgaud wanted to challenge Montholon to a duel; Napoleon stopped it, but the aggrieved officer asked permission to depart; this was granted.

THE END.—In '20 Napoleon gave up riding exercise. The ostensible reason was that he was not allowed to ride beyond certain bounds unless accompanied by a British officer. His friends believe that his health was affected by want of exercise, but it seems more probable that his illness was drawing on and prevented him from riding.

In the first months of '21 the symptoms became acute. Napoleon had never been laid up with an illness in his life,

and he refused medical aid as long as he could. But it was cancer in the stomach and there were spasms of intense pain. He felt that the end was near.

On May 5th, while a terrific storm was raging over the island, he passed away. Montholon thought he heard the last words, " France, armée, tête d'armée, Josephine."

British soldiers bore him to the grave, while the guns of the Royal Navy fired the salute.

THE ACTOR.—In the first chapter of this book two opinions were expressed: that Napoleon was an actor; that he was a great man. It may now be considered how these are borne out by the brief narrative.

A man is " acting " when his words or deeds are foreign to his nature; the acting does not affect his nature unless it becomes so habitual that his real self is completely swallowed up in the assumed character. In the first years of the Consulate Napoleon seems natural—just, clear-sighted, generous.

Carlyle says, " Let us discern that the man had a certain instinctive ineradicable feeling for reality." I think it was this feeling for reality which made him conscious of mistakes, but unfortunately vanity would not let him admit them; the pricks of conscience, so far from restraining him, only goaded him to further excesses.

A man gets drunk; an " instinctive feeling for reality " tells him that this is wrong; he either reforms or consciousness of his error drives him to stifle conscience by drinking again. Thiers thinks that Napoleon's salient characteristic was " évidemment l'intempérance, nous parlons de l'intempérance morale, bien entendu."

The worthy Dr. Jekyll begins by assuming the role of Mr. Hyde; gradually the role which was at first so foreign to his nature becomes more and more natural till finally he cannot get away from it.

So Napoleon begins by acting the bully—to frighten

England. When this fails he plays it on a bigger scale, making wars of aggression; these become so frequent that the role becomes second nature. After the great disaster in Russia he plunges into a bout of intemperance which stops at nothing. The instinctive feeling for reality is still there, telling him he is making mistakes; the genius of the soldier knows that he is fighting hopeless battles in '14 and '15. But intemperance refuses to listen to reason or genius, and he insists on living on a stage of his own imagination—a bully, among unreal people, in an unreal situation. After Waterloo he said, "I had an instinctive feeling I would fail." There spoke the real man. It was the goads of conscience that made him false to himself, unfair and rude to his gallant Marshals, callous to bloodshed, impervious to advice.

After the abdication his intemperance was under forced restraint, and he could no longer indulge his passions. But he still lived in a world of his own imagination, buoyed up by false hopes.

At St. Helena it was almost like a party of children playing "Let's make believe." Sometimes he was naive and simple, sometimes wayward, sometimes solemn; only occasionally we get a flash of the old genius and a glimpse of the real man.

Nowhere was the acting more varied. The audience was small, but it hung upon his words and made legendary history by recording them. Napoleon plays his old parts over and over again, with embellishments. Even Thiers, the great apologist, admits this: "Napoleon reasoned on the events of his reign, sincerely when his self-love could find specious excuses, sophistically when it had none to offer; but at all times conscious of his faults without admitting them, and calculating that the greatness of his glory would justify him with posterity."

Some of his statements were entirely wrong, many of them were exaggerations: his enemies were in number like the men in buckram; he was the champion of liberty,

the apostle of peace; his views varied according to his moods, and probably a good deal was added to them by those who wrote to his dictation.

History as made at St. Helena is not reliable, and much of the Napoleonic Legend is based on it.

In the *North American Review*, a critic of Guerard's book sums up as follows: "We believe that every man of sense discounts legends—and loves them."

But there is this excuse for Napoleon and his friends—all over Europe his enemies were busy making legends from the other point of view, and we must remember to discount them too.

THE GREAT MAN.—Carlyle, in his *Heroes and Hero-worship*, has given us a definition of Greatness. After discussing the hero as Divinity, Prophet, Poet, Priest, and Man of Letters, he comes to the "Hero as King—Könning—which means Can-ning, Able-man."

"The Commander over men; he to whose will our wills surrender themselves, and find their welfare in doing so, may be reckoned the most important of Great Men."

"Find their welfare"—Carlyle, of course, is using the word "great" in the fuller sense which implies good. But in the simplest sense it implies only size; there have been great sinners as well as great saints.

Whether there was any goodness to be found in Napoleon is a matter of opinion. I like to believe that in early days his people "found their welfare in surrendering themselves to his will"; the contrast between the Revolution and the Consulate shows an improvement in the welfare of France.

Then came a change—his people no longer "found their welfare." But he was still great. Why did half a million men take up arms for the invasion of Russia? In other big movements crowds have been drawn to the banners by a belief, as in the Crusades, or by patriotism, as in the Great War. But of those who went to Russia there were few who wanted to go, and probably none who knew any reason

except " Vive l'Empereur." They went because Napoleon willed it. He imposed his will on more human beings than any man in history—and that is why he has been called great.

THE SOLDIER.—In his list of heroes Carlyle has no place for soldiers. But if he could go to Westminster he would see a nation passing by the monuments of statesmen and poets to do reverence at a tomb with no name on it.

As Thackeray puts it, " Time out of mind strength and courage have been the theme of bards and romances, and from the story of Troy down to to-day poetry has always chosen a soldier for a hero."

The Great Bard chose Henry V and the men whose limbs were made in England—" We few, we happy few, we band of brothers." Across the border the immortal Burns stirred men's hearts with " Scots wha hae." Another poem tells us that none can compare to the British Grenadiers —which sentiment is so poetic and so British that it has earned eternal fame for the anonymous author.

Was Napoleon a soldier hero? Greatness implies size, heroism implies quality. It suggests self-sacrifice and high ideals as well as courage. Measured by these standards, Napoleon was no hero.

And yet men followed him. When there was no more loot or glory to be won they still followed; crossing the frozen desert of Russia they clung to him, believing that only he could save them; in the retreat from Waterloo the last square to break its ranks was the one in which Napoleon stood.

The man in the ranks is not a model of wisdom in every respect, but he is a mighty shrewd judge of his own commanding officer; no lying bulletin can throw dust in his eyes, no advertising swashbuckler can pass as a hero. The court-martial which sits round a bivouac fire may be very informal, but it has an " instinct for reality." I pin my faith to the judgment of the Grognards of the Old Guard. They spoke of him as " l'Homme."

PART IV

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

CHAPTER XXV

JOSEPHINE

JOSEPHINE was born in St. Martinique, one of the West Indian Islands, in 1763. Her father, M. Tascher de la Palagerie, came of a good family who had settled there some fifty years earlier; he owned a small plantation, and lived in fairly comfortable circumstances, though always in debt.

Josephine—her correct name was Marie Joseph Rose—was the eldest of three daughters. She spent seventeen years on the island, receiving a small amount of education at a local convent. A sister of her father, generally referred to as Madame Renaudin, was attached as a sort of companion to the household of M. de Beauharnais, the Governor of the island; she accompanied him back to France in '77 when he was dismissed for incompetence. She had acquired an extraordinary influence over him, and thirty years later they were married. This influence also extended to his son; it was undoubtedly Madame Renaudin who brought about, after much correspondence, the marriage between the young Viscomte de Beauharnais and Josephine.

The young couple had never met until M. Tascher brought his daughter to Havre in 1780. They were married at once, and, though the union was by no means a happy one, there were two children, Eugene and Hortense.

The bridegroom was a mixture of pedantry, immorality, and selfishness. His pedantry shows itself in the pompous letters regarding the marriage, which have been preserved, and in his efforts to educate Josephine; these were quite unsuccessful, and were very soon dropped. His affairs with women led to a separation from his wife, which was afterwards patched up for a time.

From the beginning of the Revolution he took a prominent part in public affairs, first as a Deputy in the Convention, and later as Military Commander at Strassburg. In the latter post he was not a success, and was forced to resign hurriedly. In 1794 he was arrested as a suspect by the Terrorists and sent to the prison of Les Carmes; his house in Paris was searched, and, though his own correspondence was not incriminating, some papers of his father were found which were sufficient in those days for the purposes of Robespierre. Josephine was arrested and thrown into the same prison.

De Beauharnais was guillotined on July 23rd, 1794, and Josephine would no doubt have followed him to the scaffold a few days later; but, when she had made up her mind that nothing could save her, the *coup d'état* of Thermidor intervened. It was Robespierre who went to execution, and Josephine found herself at liberty, with two children and practically nothing to live upon.

Her poverty did not prevent her from entering the giddy circle of Parisian society. She soon became intimate with Madame Tallien, whose acquaintance she had first made in prison. This lady seems to have been very free from jealousy; as she was only twenty years of age when Josephine was thirty-two, perhaps she felt she could afford to be generous; she introduced her friend to Barras, and it is very probable that she helped in the matter of the widow's second marriage.

A description of Josephine at this time is given by Arnault in his memoirs: "Her even temper, the gentleness of her disposition, the kindness which animated her looks and was expressed not merely in her language but in the very tones of her voice; her natural Creole indolence, which showed itself in her attitude as well as in her movements, and which she did not entirely lose when exerting herself to render a service—all this gave her a charm which counterbalanced the vivid beauty of her two rivals (Madame Tallien and

Madame Récamier). Although she had less brilliance and freshness than the other two, still, thanks to her regular features, her elegant suppleness of figure, and the sweet expression of her countenance, she was beautiful also."

After the hasty wedding and the departure of her husband for Italy the bride settled down to enjoy herself, and probably her only annoyance was from his repeated requests that she should join him. His letters, full of extravagant and passionate love, arrived almost daily. Josephine read them aloud to her friends with the comment, " Comme il est drôle, ce Bonaparte."

Napoleon did not consider himself droll, and, in fact, was taking himself very tragically, so much so that Josephine was at last forced to give way. In floods of tears she left Paris and set out for Italy ; she was escorted by Murat and Junot, and scandal says the journey was enlivened by flirtation.

It was at Milan that she met *le Capitaine Charles*, and the common talk of the army was that he became her lover. The little captain, in his beautiful hussar jacket, abundantly covered with gold lace, was more to the taste of the gay Parisienne than her impetuous Corsican, with his sallow face, lanky hair, and fiery eyes. Besides which, the captain made very good puns, and told such funny stories.

In Italy she also met for the first time the Bonaparte family. Though she strove to make herself pleasant, there was little love lost between them. The eyes of Napoleon's sisters were not blinded as his were, and it is believed that Pauline Bonaparte was the first person who told tales. Though there were none of the dramatic and tearful scenes which became frequent later on, Napoleon took action to remove the captivating hussar ; and henceforth his letters lost their fervour.

Josephine returned to Paris after the campaign was over, and got a great deal of pleasure out of the flattering welcome

extended to the conquering hero. She accompanied him as far as Toulon on his way to Egypt.

It was during this year that she bought Malmaison, a country house seven miles west of Paris. She spent much time and incurred fresh debts in fitting it out and improving the gardens; she filled it with the treasures of Italy, and till the end of her life she loved it as a home.

There also Captain Charles spent a good deal of his time, and gave Josephine's enemies, including the Bonapartes, sufficient evidence to convince her husband of her unfaithfulness.

When news was received of Napoleon's return to France Josephine took alarm and hastened to Lyons; she believed that if she could be the first to meet him her charms would conquer him afresh.

But she took the wrong road and missed him; Joseph and Lucien were first in the field with their side of the story. Napoleon determined to get a divorce. Mr. Sergeant, in his *Life of Josephine*, gives an account of the reconciliation. Napoleon had locked his door and refused to admit her; she brought her children, Eugene and Hortense, to plead for her, and their combined tears forced Napoleon to give way.

After the storm Josephine busied herself in aiding Napoleon's schemes for obtaining power, and was completely in his confidence when he was plotting the *coup d'état* of Brumaire. She probably gave him real assistance, for her knowledge of the salons of Paris was extensive.

But after he became First Consul she realised that his ambition would push him farther, and this foreshadowed trouble. If the title were made hereditary he would want an heir. She felt that divorce was hanging over her, not on account of infidelity, but because she could not give him a son. This was the tragedy of her life.

She arranged the marriage between Louis Bonaparte and her daughter Hortense, hoping that their children would

satisfy Napoleon; great was her joy at the birth of her grandson in October 1802.

At the same time her affection for Napoleon became real, and gave rise to very natural jealousy. She knew that the Bonaparte family continued to urge the divorce and to suggest younger women who might take her place; she began to be afraid that Napoleon would be carried away by some new infatuation.

Josephine had no reticence or self-restraint of any kind, and could not help making scenes, though she felt that in irritating Napoleon she was only more likely to drive him away. To her friends, and especially to Madame de Rémusat, she gave vent to her suspicions in the wildest language, accusing Napoleon of every sort of vice. But these were the fury of a woman scorned, and are of no more value as evidence than the lampoons and caricatures published by the royalists and the English. She had friends on her side who agree that she had cause for jealousy, but it is clear that they pay no attention to her wilder outbursts.

For some time, however, her position seemed to be growing stronger. Not only was she crowned Empress, but her marriage was blessed and recognised by the Church. Her son Eugene was made a Prince of France and Viceroy of Italy.

The wars of '06 and '07 took Napoleon away for long periods, and it was the wife who had almost refused to join him in his first campaign who was now anxious to cling to his side; it was his turn to refuse.

By degrees she realised that the divorce was bound to come, but there was another scene when Napoleon actually announced his decision. Josephine fainted; as they carried her out of the room she whispered to an officer who was supporting her head that the hilt of his sword was hurting her; she then resumed the faint. This little incident shows that, however much she was grieved, the announcement did not come as a surprise.

She retired to Malmaison; and the rest of her life was spent between that home and a new estate called Navarre, fifty miles out of Paris; occasional trips were made to Switzerland and watering-places.

Napoleon felt something like remorse, and did what little he could to soften the blow. She was to retain the title of Empress, the etiquette of Court, and the imperial liveries for her servants; the financial settlement was generous. The Emperor continued to visit her, and for some time they kept up a regular correspondence. He begged her to keep up her courage; he praised the "sacrifice she had made for France"; he insisted that he was still her *bon ami*. He allowed her to see the little King of Rome. He was even willing that she should meet the new Empress, but the latter, not unnaturally, shrank from the meeting, and it never took place.

The chief joy of these years was the presence of Hortense and the grandchildren. The little boy, who afterwards became Napoleon III, was the favourite of his grandmother, who spoilt him immoderately.

When the tragedy of '14 caused Napoleon's followers to desert him the wife whom he had deserted never wavered in her loyalty. Hoping that she might help in some way, she remained at Malmaison, where the Tsar, the King of Prussia, and other leaders of the Allies visited her; they treated her with much respect and kindness. She exerted herself to entertain them, and trusted she would influence them to be lenient to Napoleon.

During this time she caught a chill, and it was her exertions to entertain her guests which made it fatal.

She died at Malmaison on Whit-Sunday, May 29th, 1814.

It has been said that women had little influence on Napoleon's career, but in the case of Josephine this statement is open to conjecture. There is no doubt about Napoleon's early infatuation, and he was faithful to the

marriage tie until she broke it. Had she not done so the career might have been very different; perhaps the whole nature of the man might have been saved from the depths to which it sank. She had some of the qualities he admired, and his imagination endowed her with others. He was lenient to her petty deceits and the yearly crop of debts; he did not demand any great intelligence or depth of character. Even after he knew of her offence he found her companionable and amusing. She could never have been a helpmate in any of his big schemes, but if love had remained she might have calmed his temper and softened his ambitions.

I do not plead on behalf of Napoleon the excuse which is as old as Adam—his character was too dominant and he must bear his own sins. But conjecture, though it may be profitless, naturally arises, and there is no limit to the "might have been."

As it was, the shock staggered him; his infatuation was shattered and could never recover. His vanity felt the blow; during that period, in France above all places, the deceived husband was an object of ridicule, and ridicule is the one thing that cuts vanity and yet makes it grow. Napoleon was furious, and paid her back at once in her own coin.

After the reconciliation the parts were changed. Josephine, who had thought Napoleon droll, became an affectionate and faithful wife, and no further breath of suspicion has been cast on her behaviour. It was Napoleon's turn to find her droll; he treated her kindly, with occasional bursts of irritation.

F. Masson, who has made a study of the pair, thinks that Napoleon loved her to the last. Sergeant to some extent agrees with him.

CHAPTER XXVI

Behind the Scenes

Some of the apologists have found excuses for Napoleon's unfaithfulness. He accepted no religion, and therefore should not be judged by the code of any particular Church; he deserved no more blame than a Turkish pasha; the Revolution had destroyed the standards of decency and modesty in society; if he was no better he was also no worse than others of his time.

This last excuse seems at all events to be based on facts; in society, in the Court, even in his own family, there were very few without reproach.

In certain respects Napoleon's attitude to his womenkind was very much that of the Turk. He allowed them no influence outside their own sphere; he judged them by their physical charms; he showed no more delicacy in his advances than the pasha who throws a handkerchief. He made his choice, and sent a valet or a Court official to summon her; and it was taken for granted that she would accept the invitation as an honour. But he did not come up to the standard of the Turk, who at least draws a veil over the faces of his favourites and over the secrets of his harem.

The Corsican pasha had no such reticence about his attachments; at St. Helena he calmly counted them up on his fingers; he omitted many which have been counted by such authors as Turquan and F. Masson, but his own total of seven makes it superfluous to argue about doubtful cases.

It is hard work for the apologists to make any romance out of them; they describe the charms of the ladies, the

lavish generosity of Napoleon, and they work up an atmosphere of Arabian Nights. But on Napoleon's side the attraction was physical, and on the other side the attraction was the fame of the conqueror. As soon as these chains were snapped there was no other tie.

As already stated, wounded vanity contributed to Napoleon's first lapse.

Madame Fourès was the wife of a young lieutenant, and they had not been long married. It is said that she dressed in male attire in order to get on board a transport bound for Egypt. Napoleon noticed her one day while out riding, and arranged with Berthier to have her invited to a dinner; he joined the party, and the liaison began the same evening.

Napoleon's conduct was outrageous; the story goes that the inconvenient husband was given despatches to take back to France, but as British cruisers were on the alert, it was considered safer for madame to remain in Egypt and await his return. In due course the ship fell into the hands of the enemy—as Napoleon had doubtless foreseen. When the despatches were examined they contained nothing of importance. But either from spies or from other prisoners our sailors had wind of the gossip, and the British commodore was malicious enough to set M. Fourès at liberty. The unfortunate young man was profuse in his thanks, and hurried back to Cairo. When he arrived the situation did not admit of doubt, and he got an immediate divorce.

The liaison continued till Napoleon fled to France; madame was left behind, and it was not till some months later that she succeeded in following. As soon as she reached Paris she proposed to resume her place by his side, but the position of the First Consul was not yet secure, and he could not afford the scandal. He refused to see her. She received a liberal pension, and married a M. de Ranchoup.

His next affair was with an actress at Milan, whom he brought back to Paris; soon afterwards she ran away with

a violinist. Others filled the vacant place; each in turn received her dismissal and a pension—and consoled herself elsewhere.

During the campaign of Friedland Madame Walewska came on the scene. She was a young and beautiful Pole, married to a nobleman many years her senior. She was well educated, and is said to have had intellectual charm. Napoleon met her at a ball and was attracted at first sight; Duroc was ordered to pay her a visit and present the Emperor's compliments. Madame did not yield in a hurry, and perhaps this accounts for the fact that Napoleon's interest lasted longer than usual. She spent three weeks with him in a castle in Poland, and two years later, after Wagram, she rejoined him for a couple of months in Vienna. In 1810 she had a son who, fifty years later, became President of the Legislative Body in the reign of Napoleon III. She came to Paris and lived there quietly but luxuriously. The intimacy was dropped when Napoleon married for the second time, but she visited him again for a few days in Elba.

This last incident has been regarded as proving real affection, and the whole affair has been exalted into a sentimental romance. But the facts are not romantic; Napoleon left her side to marry another woman, and in 1816 she married another man.

These affairs, though sordid, are worth recording because they throw a light on the nature of the man; and it was a nature so complex that even a reflected light on it must be of interest.

They show that Napoleon did not corrupt innocence, and thus save him from the foulest of all reproaches. He employed no subtlety; he spun no spider's web. As a rule a valet was sent with a message which had no double meaning in it.

Furthermore, he was not persistent. If we accept the

account of Madame Junot (and there is no reason to reject it), when Napoleon's first advances were repulsed he did not return to the attack. In fact, he was cold-blooded—"take it or leave it"—such affairs were not of sufficient interest to make it worth while to waste time or effort over them. His real interests were centred in himself.

Napoleon broke no hearts, unless we count the heart of Josephine; the others were, at all events, mended very soon. While this saves him from the reproach of cruelty, it shows that there must have been something very unlovable in his nature. This seems strange, for he certainly had some of the qualities which arouse attraction, if not love. He was not bad-looking; his features were finely chiselled and his expression was unusual and "interesting"; some descriptions give him "glowing eyes and a smile of wonderful beauty." If his appearance in his youth was rather awkward and uncouth, it was not ridiculous or repulsive. He was not a dullard; he had read and thought and had any amount of imagination; it is impossible to think of Napoleon as a bore. He was abrupt, and sometimes bad-tempered, but even these qualities have not always been disattractions—the "young man of elegant manners" is not the most dangerous.

His power and ascendency over other men put him on a pedestal; his victories crowned him with the laurel leaves of fame; and there was about him the mystery which casts a glamour and excites curiosity.

In fact, he had most of the gifts which in popular novels play havoc with hearts.

And yet, with all these advantages to start with, Napoleon left no lasting impress on the people who knew him best; when the glamour of novelty and mystery had been dispelled he must have been a sorry figure of a man.

This is where the reflected light comes in. The value of it lies in the fact that it is not coloured by the political interests which are so glaring in the opinions of most of his

contemporaries. It shows us that though Napoleon had the gifts of a charlatan who can touch the imagination of a crowd, he had not the spark of humanity which touches the heart of a woman.

It might be argued that the women, who were immoral, vain, and shallow, had no hearts to break. To avoid getting out of our depth, let us put it at the lowest denomination, and say that even the most worthless of women have feelings. At their best they have shown self-sacrifice and devotion to their lovers; at their worst they have screamed jealousy and hatred at their rivals. But there is no trace of even this last; Josephine's anger was all directed against Napoleon himself, and she bore no ill-will towards her rivals. She invited Madame Walewska and others to Malmaison and treated them with kindness; they were like a good-natured party of Eastern ladies who sit down to chat about their pasha who has gone off to the wars.

Perhaps the truth is that the women avenged their sex by regarding the man as he regarded them—and that is with contempt.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Family and Court

Though Napoleon overshadowed his brothers and sisters, they were not without some of his qualities; they were ambitious, combative, and loose in their morals. F. Masson and A. Levy are the great chroniclers of the family life. The valuable *Dictionary of Napoleon*, compiled by H. N. B. Richardson, gives notes of all the interesting personalities in very handy form, and has been used in the following brief accounts:

JOSEPH, 1768–1844.—Was intended for the Church, but afterwards studied law at Pisa and became a barrister in Corsica. Driven out with the family and went to Marseilles. Married Julie Clary in '94. Entered Parliamentary life as a member for Corsica. Took a leading part in arranging the Concordat and Peace of Amiens. Made efforts to avoid renewal of war with England, and in general urged Napoleon to moderation—without success. In March '06 was placed on the throne of Naples, where he effected some useful reforms. In '08 transferred to Madrid, where five unhappy years were spent in trying to conciliate or subdue the Spanish. During '14 was Governor of Paris, and authorised Marmont to surrender the city. After Waterloo emigrated to America, but later returned to Genoa. Died at Florence.

LOUIS, 1778–1846.—Of morbid and jealous temperament. Entered military school at Chalons. A.D.C. to Napoleon in Egypt. In '02 was forced into marriage with Hortense Beauharnais, a union which neither of them desired, and which ended in misery. The hatred of the Bonapartes for the Beauharnais was at the bottom of a malicious scandal regarding Napoleon and Hortense; it was accepted by Louis, who became madly jealous. In '05 received, with reluctance, the throne of Holland. Was afterwards offered the throne of Spain, but refused. Fled from Holland in '10 and took no further part in public life.

Was never reconciled to his wife, but lived with his sons in Rome. The eldest son died as a child, the second in '31. The third, Charles Louis Napoleon (1808–'73), became Emperor Napoleon III.

LUCIEN, 1775–1840.—The most capable of the brothers. Resented Napoleon's domination from childhood, and frequently quarrelled with him, but supported him at Brumaire, and in '95 embraced the principles of the Revolution and was famous for fiery oratory. At nineteen fell in love with the daughter of an innkeeper in the South of France and married her; she was beautiful and loving, but died in '00, leaving two daughters. Entered politics as a member for Corsica, and rose to be President of the Five Hundred. During the Consulate was Minister of the Interior, but after another quarrel was sent as Ambassador to Madrid, where he amassed a fortune. In '02 secretly married the beautiful Mme. Jouberton; was a devoted husband. She was an unselfish wife; and the marriage was happy. But it enraged Napoleon, who forced Lucien to leave France. Retired to Italy. In '09, while trying to go to America, was captured by a British ship and taken to England, where he lived contentedly on parole at Thorngrove, in Worcestershire. Completely reconciled to Napoleon in '14, and served him in '15. After Waterloo returned to Italy. Had five sons and six daughters.

JEROME, 1784–1860.—Headstrong, impetuous, and extravagant. Entered the navy at fifteen. While serving on the American station married Elizabeth Patterson of Baltimore. On his return home his wife was refused permission by Napoleon to land in France; she went to England, where her son was born in Camberwell in '05; later she returned with her son to America. Napoleon insisted on a divorce, and arranged a second marriage with Princess Catherine of Wurtemburg. In '07 made King of Westphalia, where he indulged in luxury and display, wasting his revenues on worthless favourites. Driven out in '13 and retired to Switzerland. Joined Napoleon in '15, and commanded a division of Reille's corps at Waterloo in the attack on Hougoumont. Afterwards lived in Italy and Switzerland. Returned to France in '47 and held high appointments under Napoleon III.

ELISA, 1777–1820.—Described by Mme. Junot as cross-grained and disagreeable. Educated as a royal pupil at the seminary of St. Cyr. In '97 married Pasquale Bacciochi, a Corsican. Made poor literary efforts, and posed as patroness of arts. Caused scandal by intimacy with Fontanes and others.

Waged incessant war against Josephine. In '05 was made Princess of Piombino (on the coast of Italy opposite Elba), and later of Tuscany. Administered her territory with much skill, but in private life continued her scandals. When the Empire was tottering conspired with Fouché and the Murats to save themselves by joining the Allies, but was arrested by the Austrians. Settled later near Trieste and died there. Had four children.

PAULINE, 1780–1825.—"The Queen of Trinkets." Had no ambition to rule except as Venus Victorieuse; her beauty has been immortalised by the chisel of Canova: "Considérée comme œuvre d'art, cette statue, d'une composition très séduisante, provoque l'admiration; mais quand on sait que ce marbre peu habillé est un portrait de famille on peut s'étonner." The statue is in the Villa Borghese in Rome.

Fell in love, in early days, with Freron, a man much older than herself. Afterwards there was talk of marriage with Junot or Marmont. In '97 married General Leclerc. Was forced by Napoleon, much against her will, to accompany her husband to the West Indies, where he died. After displaying passionate grief, consoled herself ten months later by a second marriage with Prince Borghese, a very rich Italian. Lived in Rome, but returned to the gaiety of Paris whenever permitted by Napoleon. Exiled again for impertinence to Marie Louise.

But though giddy and pleasure-loving, had a warmer heart than the others, and stood by her brother in his troubles. Placed at his disposal her diamonds; these jewels, of enormous value, were captured by the British at Waterloo. Joined Napoleon in Elba. Received permission from the British to join him in St. Helena, and was preparing to start when news of his death arrived. Never recovered from the shock. Malice put a foul interpretation on her affection for her brother, but even their enemies admit that there was no evidence or excuse for the libel.

Pauline was reconciled to her husband, and died in his arms in Florence. Left no children.

CAROLINE, 1782–1839.—The cleverest, most ambitious, and most unscrupulous of the sisters. Hatred for Josephine led her shamelessly to encourage Napoleon's *amours* in other directions, even in her own house. Lannes, Moreau, and Augerau were mentioned as possible husbands, but the final selection was Murat (q.v.) Was ambitious that if Napoleon were killed Murat should succeed him, and continuously intrigued towards this end; selected friends and lovers who might be useful; Junot was one of her unconscious dupes. Became Queen of Naples in

'08, and ruled with some skill while Murat was absent on campaign. Even on his return kept the power in her own hands, and treated him with contempt. Intrigued with the Allies with a view to keeping her own position if Napoleon fell; this treachery led to a quarrel with Madame Mère. Changed her mind in '15 and urged Murat to rejoin Napoleon. Was imprisoned by the Austrians, but afterwards received permission to settle at Trieste, where she married a General Macdonald. Left four children.

TALLEYRAND, 1754–1838.—Prince of Benevento. Son of a general in the French army who frequented the Court of Louis XVI. As a child was injured by a fall which left him lame for life. Was educated for the Church, but mixed with the philosophers in the salons of Paris. Became Bishop of Autun in '89. Represented the Church in the first States General, and was famous for his proposed reforms. Resigned his see, and was placed under the ban of the Pope for his revolutionary action. Went to England on a diplomatic mission, and then on to the United States, where he lived for thirty months. Returned to France after the downfall of the Terror and became Minister for Foreign Affairs in '97. Helped Napoleon at Brumaire, and was at the Foreign Office for the next eight years. His influence was directed towards peace and moderation, but gradually drifted away from Napoleon, and resigned office in '08. Owing to his disapproval of the Spanish policy quarrelled with Napoleon, and a violent scene took place between them. Was the chief agent in arranging the restoration of the Bourbons after the first abdication, and represented them at the Congress of Vienna. Remained at Vienna during the Hundred Days. Retired from the Foreign Office soon after Waterloo, but was Ambassador in London from '30 to '34.

Talleyrand was immoral and corrupt, but clever, tactful, and moderate. He loved France and he loved constitutional liberty. The various enterprises of Napoleon which ended in failure were all undertaken in opposition to Talleyrand and Caulaincourt.

FOUCHÉ, 1763–1820.—Duke of Otranto. Son of a sea captain. His precocious talents attracted the attention of schoolmasters, who pushed forward his education. Became a professor of moral philosophy and mathematics. During the Revolution founded a club, and was famous for violent oratory. Intrigued with various parties, but was distrusted by all. Member of the Convention. Elected president of the Jacobins, but was afterwards expelled and had to go into hiding. Tried to get power after the fall of the Terror, but failed. Became spy in the service of Barras, and thus began to acquire power, which grew to be immense.

Appointed Minister of Police on Aug. 1st, '99. His powers of organisation and espionage made the Police a very formidable force. Was useful to Napoleon at Brumaire. Ruled the Press, and had most of the Court officials in his pay (including Bourienne, Napoleon's private secretary). Continued in touch with both royalists and Jacobins, and betrayed them all. His vast power began to alarm Napoleon, who deprived him of office, but found it necessary to reinstate him. In '10 attempted private negotiations with the British Foreign Office, which were discovered by Napoleon. Was disgraced, and took refuge in Naples, where he intrigued with Caroline Murat. After the first abdication returned to Paris and made himself useful to the Bourbons, but joined Napoleon again during the Hundred Days. This period was the climax of his treachery; though Minister of Police, he was plotting at the same time with republicans, royalists, and Metternich; was also supplying military information to the Duke of Wellington. After Waterloo was one of the chief agents in forcing Napoleon to abdicate, and was made President of the Council of Regency. Welcomed the return of Louis XVIII, and expected to be rewarded for his services, but was so universally hated and distrusted that he had to leave France. Settled at Trieste and died there. Left an immense fortune.

CAULAINCOURT, 1772–1827.—Duke of Vicenza. Of noble birth. One of the most interesting and attractive figures of the period. Served at first in the army, but afterwards turned to diplomacy. Sent on various missions, especially to Russia. Employed in the arrest of the Duc d'Enghien, but was horrified at the execution. Ambassador in Russia from '07 to '11, and was personally popular in St. Petersburg. Represented Napoleon in the negotiations of '14 and strove to induce him to accept terms. Minister for Foreign Affairs during the Hundred Days. After the second abdication lived in retirement on his estate near Laon.

Though a devoted and faithful servant of Napoleon, Caulaincourt was outspoken and courageous, always striving to avoid war and to consolidate the Bonaparte dynasty. His upright character and clean diplomacy have been universally admired, and his personal charm won the friendship and admiration of many of the allied diplomats. Was not blind to Napoleon's faults and deplored his policy, but continued to serve him; this devotion is one of the strongest points in favour of the character of both master and man.

CHAPTER XXVIII

The Marshals of France

It was the boast of the First Consul that every soldier carried in his knapsack the baton of a Marshal, and the following notes will show that the boast was justified. Neither birth, nor family influence, nor personal feeling, were passports to promotion. Napoleon employed even men whom he disliked if he thought they would be useful. *Davoust and Marmont were the only two who had any* connection with the old aristocracy; the others were of humble birth; there was not much education among them, and no great brains.

They were very youthful for such high rank; of those promoted in '04 few were over forty; Lannes, Ney, and Soult were thirty-five, born in the same year as Wellington, Castlereagh, and Napoleon himself; others were still younger.

With the exception of Massena, Davoust, and perhaps Marmont, they were not strategists—as is shown by their failures in Spain, round Dresden, and at Waterloo. But they were great subordinates. Their merits lay in their power of commanding troops and in their personal valour; the generals of those days had to be in the thickest of the fray.

Lévy, in his efforts to show us Napoleon's generous and forgiving nature, gives details of the fortunes amassed by some of the Marshals, and paints them as ungrateful, rapacious, and quick-tempered. No doubt they had their faults—so had the Knights of the Round Table and other British heroes. They were ambitious, but whereas Napoleon's ambition drenched Europe with blood, they

had no share of responsibility in this, for he never consulted them; their ambitions did no great harm to other people.

They were simple soldiers, not politicians, and therefore it is not surprising that they failed to weather the political storms of '14 and '15. They brought on themselves reproaches from one side or the other, sometimes from both; the Bourbon *émigrés* disliked them and were jealous of their fame, the extreme Bonapartists accused them of self-seeking and disloyalty. The result is that their blunders and their failings are written large—French history scarcely does justice to these brave sons of France.

Napoleon himself was always punctilious in referring to them by the titles which he had awarded, but for the sake of convenience they are here given under the names by which they are known to history, arranged in alphabetical order. The list is not complete, but contains the most interesting.

AUGERAU, 1757–1816.—Duke of Castiglione. The typical soldier of fortune; tall, commanding, and arrogant. Son of a small shopkeeper of Paris. Enlisted in Carabineers at the age of seventeen and became noted as a duellist. Got into trouble through insubordination and fled from France. Served in Russia, Prussia, Naples, and Portugal. Returned to France after the Revolution and rose rapidly. General of Division in '93. Gained much fame during campaign of Rivoli, especially at Castiglione. Chosen by Bonaparte to represent him at Paris, and carried out the *coup d'état* of Fructidor (Sept. 4th, '97). Commanded the 7th Corps throughout '05, '06, '07, but was severely wounded at Eylau and never completely recovered. In '13 and '14 Napoleon complained of his slackness. Went over to the Bourbons after the first abdication. Offered to return to Napoleon during the Hundred Days, but was repulsed. Louis XVIII deprived him of his pension, and he died shortly afterwards.

Marbot, who was on his staff, gives many anecdotes about him.

BERNADOTTE, 1763–1844.—Prince of Ponte Corvo. "The dark and fiery Gascon." Son of the Procurator of Pau. Entered the army in '80 and fought with distinction in the early revolutionary wars, rising to be General of Division in '93. In August '98 married Désirée Clary, sister-in-law of Joseph Bonaparte. For

a few months was Minister of War in '99. Conspicuous by his absence at Brumaire, and was never a warm supporter of Napoleon. Was created Prince of Ponte Corvo after Austerlitz, but has been censured for bad work at Jena and Wagram. Commanded the army which opposed the British Expedition to Walcheren. Was elected Crown Prince of Sweden in '10. As the King, Charles XIII, had no heir, he adopted Bernadotte, who took the name of Charles John; the infirmity of the old King left the control of the State in the hands of the new Crown Prince, who soon became very popular. His great object was to annex Norway, which at that time was under Denmark. Made a secret treaty with the Tsar by which the latter guaranteed the annexation of Norway in return for the assistance of thirty thousand Swedes against Napoleon. The Tsar took a great fancy for Bernadotte, and is said to have wished to make him the successor of Napoleon instead of recalling the Bourbons. But Bernadotte's cautiousness in '13 and '14 aroused the dislike of the Prussians and other Allies. Annexed Norway in November '14, and succeeded to the throne of Sweden in February '18 as Charles XIV. His reign was one of uninterrupted peace, and much was done for the development of his country. Was succeeded by his son, King Oscar I. His wife, Désirée, had refused to leave Paris, and never joined him in Sweden; she died in Paris in 1860 at the advanced age of eighty-three.

BERTHIER, 1753-1815.—Prince of Neufchatel and Wagram. "Plain but soldier-like." Son of an officer of engineers, and served all his life in the army. Went through the early wars of the Revolution. Was appointed Chief of Staff in '96, and served in that capacity through all Napoleon's campaigns except Waterloo. A methodical and capable worker; through long association with Napoleon was able to pick up his ideas and reduce them to clear orders. His office work was of the utmost value, but Napoleon had no great opinion of his brains—"Berthier was one of the geese of whom I made an eagle."

In '14 accepted the rule of the Bourbons. Was killed by a fall from a window in Bamburg on June 1st, 1815; this is supposed to have been suicide.

BESSIERES, 1768-1813.—Duke of Istria. Chivalrous, humane, and deservedly beloved; the most attractive of all the Marshals. His parents were of very humble birth, and he himself is said to have been apprenticed to a *perruquier*. Entered the army in '91 as a private. Attracted attention of Napoleon by his gallantry in '96. Commanded a Brigade in Egypt. Led a famous cavalry charge at Marengo. Served as Colonel-General of the Guard through '05, '06, '07. Went to Spain in '08, and was popular

even with the Spaniards on account of his justice and humanity. But failed to support Massena. Was appointed to command the whole of the French Cavalry in '13, but was killed at the very outset of the campaign (May 1st, 1813).

A great and dashing cavalry leader; left a spotless reputation.

DAVOUST (or Davoût), 1770–1823.—Duke of Auerstadt and Prince of Eckmuhl. Described as small, of insignificant appearance, with a round and placid face. Received first commission in '88, but was struck off the active list in '92 on account of his noble birth. Rejoined in '94. Served in Egypt and at Marengo. Promoted General of Division. Commanded the 3rd Corps with brilliant success, especially at Austerlitz, Auerstadt, and Eylau. His victory at Auerstadt was the greatest independent success of any of the Marshals, and Napoleon is said to have felt some jealousy about it. During '13 and '14 commanded at Hamburg, and defended it through a long siege until Napoleon's abdication. Refused to join the Bourbons in '14. Served as Minister of War during the Hundred Days, Was reconciled to the Bourbons later on, and his titles were restored in '17. His discipline was severe, and he was not popular, though undoubtedly a great commander.

JUNOT, 1771–1813.—Duke of Abrantes. Was never a Marshal, but is included here as an interesting general. Blustering, uncertain, excitable, but generous and lovable. Was studying law at the outbreak of the Revolution. Served at Toulon with Napoleon, and became his secretary, as his handwriting was good and Napoleon's was illegible. Wounded at Lonato in '96, and was always rather queer afterwards. Fought a duel in Egypt and was again wounded. His extravagance and prodigality made him unpopular with Napoleon. Was very angry at not receiving the baton of Marshal. Governor of Paris in '07. Commanded the force sent to Portugal in '07; was defeated at Vimiera by Sir A. Wellesley and agreed to evacuate the country. Returned to Spain, and was wounded again in '11. Was growing more truculent and rapacious, and in '13 his mind became quite deranged and he committed suicide.

In 1800 he had married Laurette Permon, who was equally extravagant. After his death she lived in Paris and was well known in society. Famous for her memoirs, which are spiteful but amusing—and very long.

LANNES, 1769–1809.—Duke of Montebello. A great athlete, of fine appearance; the typical bluff serjeant-major. Son of a livery stable-keeper, and began as an ostler. Served in the early wars of the Revolution, and rose to be Chef de Brigade, but was degraded in '95. Re-enlisted as a volunteer and worked his way

up during '96. Wounded at Arcole. Served with much distinction through Austerlitz, Jena, and especially Friedland. Received a mortal wound at Essling, and died a week later.

Was one of the very few who dared to be outspoken to Napoleon, whom he rebuked several times for his ambition; but Napoleon sincerely mourned his loss.

MARMONT, 1774–1852.—Duke of Ragusa. Sardonic, touchy, clever. Son of an ex-officer who belonged to the *petite noblesse* but took the side of the Revolution. Had some training in artillery. Served with Napoleon at Toulon, and spent a good deal of time in his company in Paris. Served as A.D.C. in Italy and Egypt. Commanded artillery with distinction in Marengo campaign, and promoted to be General of Division. Much disappointed at not receiving his baton with the first batch of Marshals, but got it after Wagram. In '05 was sent as Military Governor on the coast of the Adriatic, which command was gradually extended all along the Illyrian provinces, from Trieste to Ragusa. After distinguishing himself at Wagram was sent to relieve Massena in Spain; did well until defeated by Wellington at Salamanca, where he was severely wounded. Served through '13 and '14. After the fall of Paris joined Talleyrand in plotting for the Bourbons. His desertion was a bitter blow to Napoleon —"Marmont me porte le dernier coup." Has never been forgiven by the partisans of the Bonapartes, who declare that he was carried away, not by patriotism, but by vanity and selfishness. Was employed by the Bourbons, but, after the revolution of '30, fled to Vienna, and was appointed tutor to Napoleon's son, the Duke of Reichstadt.

MASSENA, 1756–1817.—Duke of Rivoli. Correctly spelt Masséna, but, as with other names in this book, the accents have been omitted except when necessary. Born at Nice; son of a small wine merchant of Jewish origin. Began life as a cabin-boy. His quickness and intelligence earned rapid promotion in the early wars of the Revolution. General of Division in '93. Very successful throughout the campaign of Rivoli. Napoleon called him "l'enfant gâté de la victoire." But his fame was soiled by his rapacity. While Napoleon was in Egypt Massena remained on the French frontier, and dealt the Russians a blow at Zurich in September '99. Afterwards was besieged in Genoa at the outset of the Marengo campaign.

During the campaign of Wagram was unable to mount a horse, but commanded his corps from a travelling carriage; earned much distinction at Aspern. Then went to command in the Peninsula, but was too indolent and pleasure-loving to be successful. Marbot describes the scandals caused by the presence

of his mistress at Headquarters; this contributed to rouse ill-feeling between him and his subordinates. Quarrelled with Ney and Bessieres. It is said that it was only through the disobedience of Bessieres that he failed to defeat Wellington at Fuentes d'Onoro. Relieved by Marmont after this battle and was not employed again in the field.

After the Bourbons were restored he accepted their rule, but when summoned as member for a court-martial on his old enemy Ney he refused to sit. This refusal brought him into disgrace, and he died shortly afterwards.

By instinct a strong republican, and not ambitious (except for wealth). Shares with Davoust the reputation of being the most able of the Marshals, but, like Davoust, was not a personal favourite of Napoleon.

MURAT, 1767–1815.—King of Naples. Another typical swash-buckler. Handsome, very vain, open-mannered, hot-tempered, impetuously brave. Spent enormous sums on gold lace and ostrich feathers.

Younger son of an innkeeper. Destined for the Church, and received some education at Toulouse, but ran away and enlisted in the cavalry. Was regarded as a violent supporter of the Revolution. Assisted Napoleon at Vendemiaire, and was appointed A.D.C. in Italy. Led a famous charge at the Battle of the Pyramids, and became renowned as a cavalry leader. Was conspicuous at Brumaire. Married Caroline Bonaparte in January '00. Governor of Paris in '04. After Austerlitz was made Grand Duke of Berg and Cleves. Became King of Naples in '08, when Joseph left Naples for Madrid.

His independence brought about strained relations with Napoleon, who had expected him to remain a vassal of France. Joined the army again, and fought with his usual gallantry in '12, also at Dresden and Leipzig in '13. After Leipzig got into touch with Metternich, who promised to guarantee him his kingdom if he would desert Napoleon and join the Allies. Murat agreed, and aspired to become ruler of all Italy. Metternich, however, had other ideas, and was sure that Murat would commit some folly which would be an excuse for repudiating the guarantee. After the first abdication Murat began to see that he had nothing to hope from the Congress of Vienna, so in '15 declared again for Napoleon. Led an army into the North of Italy, but was defeated by the Austrians at Tolentino, May 2nd, '15. Fled to Marseilles, and offered his services to Napoleon, who refused them. Made a final and desperate attempt to recover his kingdom in October, but got no support. Was taken prisoner at Pizzo, tried by court-martial, and shot. Left two sons.

NEY, 1769-1815.—Duke of Elchingen and Prince of Moscow. Son of a cooper. Little education. Enlisted in hussars in '88, and was elected sub-lieutenant in '92. Served under Hoche, Massena, and Moreau (at Hohenlinden). Commanded 6th Corps at Ulm, Jena, and Friedland. Then went for two years to Spain, but quarrelled with Massena and was recalled and censured; 1812 brought him back to high favour. Famous for commanding the rear-guard, and was the last man to leave Russia. After fighting all through '13 and '14 took part with Caulaincourt in trying to get good terms for Napoleon, but resisted Napoleon's desire to continue the struggle by arms. After the first abdication protested his loyalty to the Bourbons, but resented the attitude of their partisans. While Napoleon was marching on Paris during the Hundred Days Louis XVIII sent Ney with a force to stop him, and Ney made the famous remark that he would bring back Napoleon in an iron cage. In spite of this, went over to Napoleon a week later; this was the treachery to Louis XVIII for which he was afterwards shot. Has been much blamed by some authors for excess of caution at Quatre Bras and excess of rashness at Waterloo; had seven horses shot under him during these two days. After Waterloo a warrant was issued for his arrest. Louis XVIII hoped he would escape, but Ney made only a half-hearted attempt to evade it. After his capture the extreme royalists insisted on a trial, and the passions of the moment were so strong that Louis XVIII had to give way. Claimed to be tried by the House of Peers instead of a military court. Was condemned, the Duc de Broglie being the only dissentient. Was shot in the garden of the Luxembourg, Dec. 7th, '15. Met his death with calmness and dignity.

SOULT, 1769-1851.—Duke of Dalmatia. Son of a notary. Well educated and intended for the Bar, but enlisted as a private in '85. Rose gradually to be General of Division in '99. Chiefly employed with the Army of the Rhine. Under Massena in Switzerland and in Genoa ('99). Commanded a corps at the Camp of Boulogne, and led it to Ulm and Austerlitz and Jena. In Spain from '08 to '12. Returned to the Grand Army for '13, but was again sent to Spain to try to repair the disaster of Vittoria. Made a good resistance to Wellington's advance till the first abdication. Chief of Staff at Waterloo. Exiled on the return of the Bourbons, but was recalled in 1820 and reinstated as a Marshal of France; held the Ministry of War and other appointments. Represented Louis Phillippe at the coronation of Queen Victoria in '38.

CHAPTER XXIX

The Authorities

BIOGRAPHIES.—It would be absurd to attempt a survey of the Napoleonic bibliography, but the following notes may be of use to military students.

The *Life of Napoleon I*, by J. Holland Rose, is rightly accepted as the standard work in the English language. It requires no praise from me, but I must acknowledge my indebtedness. In two volumes it covers the whole of the ground, and the student who starts on such a foundation will never find himself out of depth when dipping into other works. Mr. Rose has followed it up with special works, which include *Napoleonic Studies*, *Pitt and Napoleon*, *The Personality of Napoleon*.

The twenty volumes of M. Thiers are rather forbidding to officers who have not much time for reading, but it is worth while to look at even a few chapters, for they show us the light in which many Frenchmen regard Napoleon. M. Thiers was a good democrat. In case there should be any doubt about this, he repeats it on every other page, and concludes by drawing the moral that France must never again entrust her fate to a single individual. All despots are bad—and yet it is rather nice to think that the great French despot was so very glorious; M. Thiers has no doubt about the glory. He is like some staid old gentleman who deplores the follies of his youth, but cannot resist lingering over the memories of them.

MILITARY WORKS.—The researches of the French General Staff are issued in the *Revue d'Histoire*; they are priceless to historians who want to verify facts, but go into more detail than the ordinary student requires.

VON WARTENBURG'S two volumes, *Napoleon as a General*, are much used at the Staff College and such places. His own sentiments will not appeal to British readers, but he has hit off the perspective that suits military students; that is to say, he gives a clear, consecutive narrative, with just enough detail to illustrate the lessons in strategy which he wants to bring out. It is much to be regretted that no French author has given us a work on similar lines.

Mention has already been made of HENRI HOUSSAYE, but unfortunately he only deals with '14 and '15.

There are several useful English works on particular campaigns, such as those by F. LORAINE PETRE, COLONEL F. MAUDE.

MAPS.—In reading military history one eye should always be kept on the map, and it is very regrettable that many works, such as Von Wartenburg's, are so badly provided in this respect. The Austrian author Von Horzetsky has compiled a complete set of maps showing the moves of corps; they form in themselves a very good narrative, and make reading easy. Unfortunately, they are so big (27 inches square) and so expensive that they are only found in good military libraries. The maps of battle-fields in ALISON'S *History* are beautifully drawn, and give a good idea of the ground; but by some curious mistake the wrong scale has been placed on one or two of them. The maps in Anderson's *Precis of Great Campaigns* are reliable.

MEMOIRS.—Some of the sterner school of military authors brush aside such memoirists as BARON MARBOT; his own adventures stagger our credulity, and many of his statements are based on camp gossip; at his best, he is a chronicler of small beer. In spite of this, Marbot has a real value of his own. Though research may prove camp gossip wrong (which, as all soldiers know, it generally is), the fact remains that it was current at the time, and reflects the beliefs and opinions of the troops. An army is the most human and most sensitive thing that ever existed; it may

be tamed and drilled and set in motion by the orders of its chief, but its achievements depend on its mood. Discipline may train it to rise superior to panic, depression, weariness, but all the same it feels the damping effect of a thunderstorm and the discomforts of hunger and thirst. Rightly to appreciate a campaign we must try to breathe the atmosphere and share the mood of the troops—the elan of Jena, the dumb fury of the struggle in the snow-drifts of Eylau. This is where eye-witnesses are helpful. Great writers like Carlyle, Thackeray, Tolstoy, can reproduce atmosphere, but Marbot gives us a breath of the original.

Many delightful memoirs of the Waterloo campaign have been left by British officers, such as Shaw Kennedy, Mercer, and Siborne's collection of *Waterloo Letters*. They deal, of course, with the British side of the scene.

The private life of Napoleon and his Court are given by Meneval, Bourienne (private secretary), Constant (valet), Madame de Rémusat (lady-in-waiting to Josephine), and Madame Junot.

To sum up—the student may be recommended to read Rose, Von Wartenburg, and Houssaye; after them memoirs *quant. ff.*—it will be found that the appetite grows in reading.

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Patel Rd,



Only those places are marked which are mentioned in the text.